This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NOTICE.

H. S. NICHOLS & CO. respectfully beg to call the attention of purchasers to the fact that all Books issued by them are intended to be sold at the net advertised prices without deduction, and that they are supplied to Booksellers on terms which will not allow of any discount being given by them to the public.

Eric Addleshaw.

Rev Addleshaw.

Uniform with the present volume:

"MEMOIRS OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE." 2 vols.

"SECRET MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV." 1 vol.

"SECRET MEMOIRS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF FRANCE." 2 vols.

"THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS OF LOUIS XV." 1 vol.

"THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF BERLIN." 2 vols.

"THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT AND CABINET OF ST. CLOUD." 2 vols.

MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME LA MARQUISE DE MONTESPAN

Edition strictly limited to 500 copies.

Five extra copies have been printed on Japanese vellum, but are not offered for sale.

Mme. de la Vallière.

Reproduced from an Oil Painting.

MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME LA MARQUISE

DE

MONTESPAN

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME II

LONDON

H. S. NICHOLS & CO.

3 SOHO SQUARE AND 62A PICCADILLY W

MDCCCXCV

Printed and Published by
H. S. NICHOLS AND CO.,
3, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.

LIBRARY
LELAND STANFORD, JUNIOR
UNIVERSITY

127774

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

The Prince de Mont-Béliard—He agrees to the propositions made him—The King's note—Diplomacy of the Chancellor of England—Letter from the Marquis de Montespan—The Duchy in the air—The domain of Navarre, belonging to the Prince de Bouillon, promised to the Marquise 1

CHAPTER II

The Venetian drummer—The little Olivier—Adriani's love—His ingratitude—His punishment—His vengeance—Complaint on this account 10

CHAPTER III

The equipage at full speed—The poor vine-grower—Sensibility of Madame de Maintenon—Her popularity—One has the right to crush a man who will not get out of the way—What one sees—What they tell you—All ends at the opera—One can be moved to tears and yet like chocolate 17

CHAPTER IV

Charles II., King of England—How interest can give memory—His grievances against France—The two daughters of the Duke of York—William of Orange marries one, in spite of the opposition of the King—Great joy of the Allies—How the King of England understands peace—Saying of the King—Preparations for war . 23

CHAPTER V

The great Mademoiselle buys Choisy—The President Gonthier—The indemnity—The salmon—The harangue as it is not done in the Academy 28

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

Departure of the King—Ghent reduced in five days—Taking of Ypres—Peace signed—The Prince of Orange is at pains not to know of it—Horrible cruelties 35

CHAPTER VII

Mission of Madame de Maintenon to Choisy—Mademoiselle gives the Principalities of Eu and Dombes in exchange for M. de Lauzun—He is set at liberty 39

CHAPTER VIII

M. de Brisacier and King Casimir—One is never so well praised as by oneself—He is sent to get himself made a Duke elsewhere . 46

CHAPTER IX

Compliment from Monsieur to the new Prince de Dombes—Roman History—The Emperors Trajan, Marcus Aurelius and Verus—The danger of erudition 50

CHAPTER X

The Benedictines of Fontevrault—The head in the basin—The unfortunate delivery—The baptism of the monster—The courageous marriage—Foundation of the Royal Abbey of Fontevrault 54

CHAPTER XI

Fine couples make fine children—The Dauphine of Bavaria—She displeases Madame de Montespan—First *début* relating to Madame de Maintenon, appointed Lady-in-waiting—Conversation between the two Marquises 62

CHAPTER XII

The "Powder of Inheritance"—The *Chambre Ardente*—The Comtesse de Soissons' arrest decreed—The Marquise de Montespan buys her superintendence of the Queen's Council—Madame de Soubise—Madame de Maintenon and the King 69

CHAPTER XIII

PAGE

Marie Louise, daughter of Henrietta of England, betrothed to the King of Spain — Her affliction — Jealousy of the King, her husband 74

CHAPTER XIV

The Dauphine of Bavaria—The confessor with spurs—Madame de Maintenon disputes with Bossuet—He opposes to her past ages and history—The military absolution 78

CHAPTER XV

Père de la Chaise—The Jesuits—The Pavilion de Belleville—The handkerchief 83

CHAPTER XVI

Mademoiselle de Fontanges—The Pavilions of the Gardens of Flora —Rapid triumph of the Favourite—Her retreat to Val-de-Grâce —Her death 90

CHAPTER XVII

Madame de Sévigné—Madame de Grignan—Madame de Montespan at the Carmelites—Madame de la Vallière—These two great ruins console one another—An angel of sweetness, goodness and kindness 98

CHAPTER XVIII

Reflections—The future—The refuge of foresight—Community of Saint-Joseph—Wicked saying of Bossuet 105

CHAPTER XIX

The Court travels in Picardy and Flanders—The boudoir navy—Madame de Montespan is not invited—The King relates to her the delights of the journey—Reflections of the Marquise . . 112

CHAPTER XX

PAGE

The Duchesse d'Orléans—The Duchesse de Richelieu—An epigram of Madame de Maintenon—An epigram of the King to his brother 118

CHAPTER XXI

The Marquis de Lauzun at liberty—His conduct to his wife—Recovery of Mademoiselle 122

CHAPTER XXII

Progress of Madame de Maintenon—The anonymous letter . . 126

CHAPTER XXIII

Madame de Maintenon at loggerheads with Madame de Thianges—The Mint of the d'Aubigné family—Crême de Négresse, the elixir of long life—Ninon's secret for beauty—The King would remain young or become so—Goodwill of Madame de Maintenon 129

CHAPTER XXIV

The casket of M. de Lauzun—His historical gallery—He makes some nuns—M. de Lauzun in the lottery—The loser wins—Queen out of pique—Letter from the Queen of Portugal—The ingratitude of M. de Lauzun 138

CHAPTER XXV

The Nephews, the Nieces, the Cousins and the Brother of Madame de Maintenon—The King's *début*—The Marshal's silver staff . 144

CHAPTER XXVI

Political intrigue in Hungary—Dignity of the King of the Romans—The good appearance of a German Prince—The Turks at Vienna—The Duc de Lorraine—The King of Rome . . . 151

CHAPTER XXVII

The Prince of Orange—The Orange coach—The bowls of oranges—The orange blossoms—The town of Orange—Jesuits of Orange—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes 158

CHAPTER XXVIII

PAGE

Sickness — Death of the Queen — Her last words — The King's affliction—His saying—Second anonymous letter—Conversation with La Dauphine—Madame de Maintenon intervenes . . . 162

CHAPTER XXIX

Judgment given by the Châtelet—The Marquis d'Antin restored to his father—The judgment is not executed—Full mourning—Funeral service—The Notary of Saint-Élix—The *lettre de cachet* . 172

CHAPTER XXX

The Duc du Maine provided with the Government of Languedoc—The young Prince de Conti—His piety—His apostasy—The Duc de la Feuillade burlesqued—The watch set with diamonds—The false robber—Scene amongst the servants 179

CHAPTER XXXI

A funeral and diversions—Sinister dream—Funeral orations of the Queen 185

CHAPTER XXXII

Jean Baptiste Colbert—His death—His great works—His last advice to the Marquise 191

CHAPTER XXXIII

Mesdemoiselles de Mazarin—The age of puberty—Madame de Beauvais—Anger of the Queen-mother—The Cardinal's policy—First love—Louis de Beauvais—The Abbé de Rohan-Soubise—The Emerald's *lying in*—The handsome Musketeer—The *counterfeit* of the King 199

CHAPTER XXXIV

The young nobility and the Turks—Private correspondence—The unlucky Minister and the page of Strasburg—The King judged and described in all the documents—The King humiliated in his affections—Scandal at Court—Grief of fathers at having given

PAGE

life to such children—Why Prince Eugène was not a Bishop—Why he was not a Colonel of France—Death of the Prince de Conti 206

CHAPTER XXXV

Ninon at Court—The King behind the glass—Anxiety of the Marquise on the subject of this interview—Visit to Madame de Maintenon—Her reply and her ambiguous promise 215

CHAPTER XXXVI

Birth of the Duc d'Anjou—The present to the mother—The casket of patience—Departure of the King for the Army—The King turns a deaf ear—How that concerns Madame de Maintenon—The prisoner of the Bastille—The danger of caricatures—The administrative thermometer—Actors who can neither be applauded nor hissed—Relapse of the prisoner—Scarron's will—A fine subject for engraving—Madame de Maintenon's opinion upon the Jesuits—The audience of the Green *Salon*—Portions from the Refectory—Madame de Maintenon's presence of mind—I will make you schoolmaster 232

CHAPTER XXXVII

The King takes Luxembourg because *it is his will*—Devastation of the Electorate of Trèves—The Marquis de Louvois—His portrait—The marvels which he worked—The Le Tellier and the Mortemart—The King destines Mademoiselle de Louvois to a Colbert—How one manages not to bow—The Dragonades—A necessary man—Money makes fat—Meudon—The horoscope . . . 243

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The Reformed Religion and painting on enamel—Petitot and Heliogabalus—Theological discussion with the Marquise—The King's intervention—Louis XIV. renders his account to the Christian and Most Christian painter—The King's word is not to be resisted—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes 250

CHAPTER XXXIX

PAGE

Lovers' vows—The Body-guards—Racine's *Phèdre*—The pit—Allusions—The duel—M. de Monclar—The cowled spy—He escapes with a fright—M. de Monclar in Jersey—Gratitude of the Marquise—Happy memory 258

CHAPTER XL

Parallel between the diamond and the sun—Taste of the Marquise for precious stones—The King's collection of medals—The Crown of Agrippina—The Duchess of York—Disappointment of the Marquise—To lend is not to give—The Crown well guarded—Fright of the Marquise—The thief recognised—The Marquise lets him hang—The difference between Cromwell and a trunk-maker—Delicate restitutions—The Bourbons of Madame de Montespan 268

CHAPTER XLI

The Duchesse de Lesdiguières—Her jest—The "Chair of Convenience"—Anger of the Jesuits—They ally themselves with the Archbishop of Paris—The forty hours' prayers—Thanks of the Marquise to the Prelate—His visit to Saint-Joseph—Anger of the Marquise—Her welcome to the Prelate 277

CHAPTER XLII

The verse of Bérénice—Praises of Boileau—The King's aversion to satirical writers—The painter Le Brun—His Bacchus—The water-bottle—The pyramid of Jean Châtel injurious to the Jesuits—They solicit its demolition—Madame de Maintenon's opposition—Political Views of Henri IV. on this matter—The Jesuits of Paris proclaim the dedication of their College to Louis the Great—The gold pieces 284

CHAPTER XLIII

Little Opportune—M. and Madame Bontems—The young Moor weaned—The good Curé—The Blessed Virgin—Opportune at the Augustinians of Meaux—Bossuet Director—Mademoiselle Albanier and Léontine—Flight of Opportune—Her threats of suicide—Visit of the Marquise—Prudence of the Court . . 295

CHAPTER XLIV

PAGE
The aristocratic Republic of Genoa offends the King—Its punishment—Reception of the Doge at Paris and Versailles . . . 304

CHAPTER XLV

The Comte de Vermandois—His entrance into the world—Quarrels with the Dauphin—Duel—Siege of Courtrai—The Cathedral of Arras 310

CHAPTER XLVI

The House of Saint-Cyr—Petition of the Monks of Saint-Denis to the King against the plan of Madame de Maintenon—Madame de Maintenon summons them and sends them away with small consolation 323

CHAPTER XLVII

Final rupture—Terrible scene—Madame de Maintenon in the brocaded chair 333

HISTORICAL NOTICE

To serve as a Supplement to these Memoirs 352

MEMOIRS

OF

MME. LA MARQUISE DE MONTESPAN

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCE DE MONT-BÉLIARD — HE AGREES TO THE PROPOSITIONS MADE HIM—THE KING'S NOTE—DIPLOMACY OF THE CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND — LETTER FROM THE MARQUIS DE MONTESPAN—THE DUCHY IN THE AIR—THE DOMAIN OF NAVARRE, BELONGING TO THE PRINCE DE BOUILLON, PROMISED TO THE MARQUISE.

THERE was but a small company this year at the Waters of Bourbonne—to begin with, at any rate; for afterwards there appeared to be many arrivals—to see me, probably, and Mademoiselle de Nantes.

The Chancellor Hyde was already installed there, and his establishment was one of the most

agreeable and convenient; he was kind enough to exchange it for mine. A few days afterwards he informed me of the arrival of the Prince de Mont-Béliard, of Würtemberg, who was anxious to pay his respects to me, as though to the King's daughter. In effect, this royal Prince came and paid me a visit; I thought him greatly changed for such a short lapse of years.

We had seen each other — as, I believe, I have already told—at the time of the King's first journey in Flanders. He recalled all the circumstances to me, and was amiable enough to tell me that, instead of waning, my beauty had increased.

"It is you, Prince, who embellish everything," I answered him. "I begin to grow like a dilapidated house; I am only here to repair myself."

Less than a year before, M. de Mont-Béliard had lost that amiable Princess, his wife; he had a lively sense of this loss, and never spoke of it without tears in his eyes.

"You know, madam," he told me, "my states are, at present, not entirely administered, but

occupied throughout by the officers of the King of France. Those persons who have my interests at heart, as well as those who delight at my fears, seem persuaded that this provisional occupation will shortly become permanent. I dare not question you on this subject, knowing how much discretion is required of you; but I confess that I should pass quieter and more tranquil nights if you could reassure me up to a certain point."

"Prince," I replied to him, "the King is never harsh except with those of whom he has had reason to complain. M. le Duc de Neubourg, and certain other of the Rhine Princes, have been thick-witted enough to be disloyal to him; he has punished them for it, as Cæsar did, and as all great princes after him will do. But you have never shown him either coldness, or aversion, or indifference. He has commanded the Maréchal de Luxembourg to enter your territory to prevent the Prince of Orange from reaching there before us, and your authority has been put, not under the domination, but under the protection, of the King of France, who is desirous of being able to pass from there into the Brisgau."

Madame de Thianges, Madame de Nevers and myself did all that lay in our power to distract or relieve the sorrows of the Prince; but the loss of Mademoiselle de Châtillon, his charming spouse, was much more present with him than that of his states; the bitterness which he drew from it was out of the reach of all consolation possible. The Marquise de Thianges procured the Chancellor of England to approach the Prince, and find out from him, to a certain extent, whether he would consent to exchange the County of Mont-Béliard for some magnificent estates in France, to which some millions in money would be added.

M. de Würtemberg asked for a few days in which to reflect, and, imagining that these suggestions emanated from Versailles, he replied that *he could refuse nothing to the greatest of Kings.* My sister wrote on the day following to the Marquis de Louvois, instead of asking it of the King in person. M. de Louvois, who, probably, wished to despoil M. de Mont-Béliard without undoing his purse-strings, put this overture before the King maliciously, and the King wrote me immediately the following letter:

"Leave M. de Mont-Béliard alone, and do not speak to him again of his estates. If the matter which occupies Madame de Thianges could be arranged, it would be of the utmost propriety that a principality of such importance rested in the Crown, at least as far as sovereignty. The case of the Principality of Orange is a good enough lesson to me; there must be one ruler only in an Empire. As for you, my dear lady, feel no regret for all that. You shall be a Duchess, and I am pleased to give you this title which you desire. Let M. de Montespan be informed that his marquisate is to be elevated into a duchy with a peerage, and that I will add to it the number of seigneuries that is proper, as I do not wish to deviate from the usage which has become a law, etc."

The Prince's decision was definite, and as his character was, there was no wavering. I wrote to him immediately to express my lively gratitude, and we considered, the Marquise and I, as to the intermediary to whom we could entrust the unsavoury commission of approaching the Marquis de Montespan. He hated all my family from his having obtained no satisfaction from it for his wrath. We begged the Chancellor Hyde, a personage of importance, to be good enough to accept this mission; he saw no reason to refuse it, and after ten or eleven days, he received the

following reply, with which he was moderately amused:

"CHÂTEAU SAINT-ÉLIX. . . . AT THE WORLD'S END.

"I am sensible, my lord, as I should be, of the honour which you have wished to do me, whilst, notwithstanding, permit me to consider it strange that a man of your importance has cared to meddle in such a negotiation. His Majesty the King of France did not consult me when he wished to make my wife his mistress; it is somewhat remarkable that so great a Prince expects my intervention to-day to recompense conduct that I have disapproved, that I disapprove, and shall disapprove to my last breath. His Majesty has got eight or ten children from my wife without saying a word to me about it; this Monarch can surely, therefore, make her a present of a duchy without summoning me to his assistance. According to all laws, human and Divine, the King ought to punish Madame de Montespan, and instead of censuring her, he wishes to make her a Duchess! . . . Let him make her a Princess, even a Highness, if he likes; he has all the power in his hands. I am only a twig; he is an oak.

"If Madame is fostering ambition, mine has been satisfied for forty years; I was born a Marquis; a Marquis—apart from some unforeseen catastrophe—I will die; and Madame la Marquise, as long as she does not alter her conduct, has no need to alter her degree.

"I will, however, waive my severity, if M. le Duc

du Maine will intervene for his mother, and call me *his father*, however it may be. I am none the less sensible, my lord, of the honour of your acquaintance, and since you form one of the society of Madame la Marquise, endeavour to release yourself from her charms, for she can be an enchantress when she likes. . . . It is true that, from what they tell me, you were not quite King in your England.

"I am, from out my exile (almost as voluntary as yours), the most obliged and grateful of your servants,

"De Gondrin Montespan."

The Marquise de Thianges felt a certain irritation; at the reading of this letter she offered all our excuses for it to the English Chancellor, and said to me: "I begin to fear that the King of Versailles is not acting with good faith towards you, when he makes your advancement depend on the Marquis de Montespan; it is as though he were giving you a duchy in the moon."

I sent word to the King that the Marquis refused to assist his generous projects; he answered me: "Very well, we must look somewhere else."

Happily, this domestic humiliation did not transpire at Bourbonne, for M. de la Bruyère had arrived there with Monsieur le Prince; and that

model satirist would unfailingly have made merry over it at my expense.

The best society lavished its attentions on me; Coulanges, whose flatteries are so amusing, never left us for a moment.

The Prince, after the States were over, had come to relax himself at Bourbonne, which was his property. After having done all in his power formerly to dethrone his master, he is his enthusiastic servitor now that he sees him so strong. He was fascinated with Mademoiselle de Nantes, and asked my permission to seek her hand for the Duc de Bourbon, his grandson; my reply was, that the alliance was desirable on both sides, but that these arrangements were settled only by the King.

In spite of the insolent diatribe of M. de Montespan, the waters proved good and favourable; my blood, little by little, grew calm; my pains, passing from one knee to the other, insensibly faded away in both; and, after having given a brilliant *fête* to the Prince de Mont-Béliard, the English Chancellor, and our most distinguished bathers, I went back to Versailles, where the work seemed to me to have singularly advanced.

The King went in advance of us to Corbeil; Madame de Maintenon, her pretty nieces, and my children were in the carriage. The King received me with his ordinary kindness, and yet said no word to me of the harshness which I had suffered from my husband. Two or three months afterwards, he recollected his royal word, and gave me to understand that the Prince de Bourbon was shortly going to give up Navarre, in Normandy, and that this vast and magnificent estate would be raised to a duchy for me.

It has not been yet, at the moment that I write. Perhaps it is written above that I shall never be a Duchess. In such a case, the King would not deserve the inward reproaches that my sensibility addresses him, since his good-will would be fettered by destiny.

It is my kindness which makes me speak so.

CHAPTER II

THE VENETIAN DRUMMER — THE LITTLE OLIVIER — ADRIANI'S LOVE — HIS INGRATITUDE — HIS PUNISHMENT—HIS VENGEANCE—COMPLAINT ON THIS ACCOUNT.

AT the great slaughter of Candia, M. de Vivonne had the pleasure of saving a young Venetian drummer whom he noticed all covered with blood, and senseless, amongst the dead and dying, with whom the field was covered far and wide. He had his wounds dressed and cared for by the surgeons of the French navy, with the intention of giving him me, either as a *valet de chambre* or a page, so handsome and agreeable this young Italian was. Adriani was his name. He presented him to me after the return of the expedition to France, and I was sensible of this amiable attention of my brother, for truly the peer of this young drummer did not exist.

Adrien was admirable to see in my livery, and when my carriage went out, he attracted alone all the public attention. His figure was still not all that it might be; it developed suddenly, and then one was not wrong in comparing him with a perfect model for the Academy. He took small time in losing the manners which he had brought with him from his original calling. I discovered the best *ton* in him; he would have been far better seated in the interior than outside my equipage. Unfortunately, this young impertinent gave himself airs of finding my person agreeable, and of cherishing a passion for me; my first *valet de chambre* told me of it at once. I gave him to the King, who had sometimes noticed him in passing.

Adrien was inconsolable at first at this change, for which he was not prepared, but his vanity soon came uppermost; he understood that it was an advancement, and took himself for a great personage, since he had the honour of approaching and serving the King.

The little Olivier—the first assistant in the shop of Madame Camille, my dressmaker—saw Adrien, inspired him with love, and herself with

much, and they had to be married. I was good-natured enough to be interested in this union, and as I had never any fault to find with the intelligent services and attentions of the little *modiste*, I gave her two hundred louis,[1] that she might establish herself well and without any waiting.

She had a daughter whom she was anxious to call Athénais. I thought this request excessive; I granted my name of *Françoise* only.

The young couple would have succeeded amply with their business, since my confidence and favour were sufficient to give them vogue; but I was not slow in learning that cruel discord had already penetrated to their household, and that Adrien, in spite of his adopted country, had remained at heart Italian. Jealous without motive, and almost without love, he tormented with his suspicions, his reproaches and his harshness, an attentive and industrious young wife, who loved him with intense love and was unable to succeed in persuading him of it. From her condition,

1 About eighteen thousand francs to-day. — EDITOR'S NOTE.

a *modiste* cannot dispense with being amiable, gracious, engaging. The little Olivier, as pretty as one can be, easily secured the homage of the cavaliers. For all thanks she smiled at the gentlemen, as a well brought up woman should do. Adrien disapproved these manners—*too French*, in his opinion. One day, he dared to say to his wife, and that before witnesses: "*Because you have belonged to Madame de Montespan, do you think you have got the same rights as her?*" And with that he administered a blow to her.

This indecency was reported to me. I did not take long in discovering what it was right to do with Adrien. I had him sent to Clagny, where I happened to be at the time.

"Monsieur the Venetian drummer," I said to him, with the hauteur which it was necessary to oppose to his audacity, "Monsieur le Maréchal de Vivonne, who is always too good, saved your life without knowing you. I gave you to the King, imagining that I knew you. Now I am undeceived, and I know, without the least possibility of doubt, that beneath the appearance of a good heart you hide the ungrateful and insolent rogue.

The King needs persons more discreet, less violent and more polite. *Madame de Montespan* gave you up to the King; *Madame de Montespan* has taken you back this morning to her service. You depend for the future on nobody but *Madame de Montespan*, and it is her alone that you are bound to obey. Your service in her house has commenced this morning; it will finish this evening, and, before midnight, you will leave her for good and all. I have known on all occasions how to pardon slight offences; there are some that a person of my rank could not excuse; yours is of that number. Go; make no answer! Obey, ingrate! Disappear, I command you!"

At these words he tried to throw himself at my feet. "Go, wretched fellow!" I cried to him; and, at my voice, my lackeys ran up and drove him from the room and from the château.

Almost always these bad-natured folk have cowardly souls. Adrien, his head in a whirl, presented himself to my *Suisse* at Versailles, who, finding his look somewhat sinister, refused to receive him. He retired to my hotel in Paris, where the *Suisse*, being less of a physiognomist,

delivered him the key of his old room and was willing to allow him to pass the night there.

Adrien, thinking of naught but how to harm me and give me a memorable proof of his vengeance, ran and set fire to my two storehouses, and, to put a crown on his rancour, went and hanged himself in an attic.

About two o'clock in the morning, a sick-nurse, having perceived the flames, gave loud cries and succeeded in making herself heard. Public help arrived; the fire was mastered. My *Suisse* sought everywhere for the Italian, whom he thought to be in danger; he stumbled against his corpse. — What a scene! what an affliction! The commissary having had his room opened, on a small bureau a letter was found which he had been at the pains of writing, and in which he accused me of his despair and death.

The people of Paris have been at all times extravagance and credulity itself. They looked upon this young villain as *a martyr*, and at once dedicated *an elegy* to him, in which I was compared with Medea, Circe and Frédégonde.

It is precisely on account of this elegy that

I have cared to set down this cruel anecdote. My readers, to whom I have just narrated the facts with entire frankness, can see well that, instead of having merited reproaches, I should only have received praise for my restraint and moderation.

It is, assuredly, most painful to have to suffer the abuse of those for whom we have never done aught; but the outrages of those whom we have succoured, maintained and favoured, are insupportable injuries.

CHAPTER III

THE EQUIPAGE AT FULL SPEED—THE POOR VINE-GROWER — SENSIBILITY OF MADAME DE MAINTENON — HER POPULARITY—ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO CRUSH A MAN WHO WILL NOT GET OUT OF THE WAY—WHAT ONE SEES — WHAT THEY TELL YOU — ALL ENDS AT THE OPERA—ONE CAN BE MOVED TO TEARS AND YET LIKE CHOCOLATE.

ANOTHER event with a tragical issue, and one to which I contributed even less, served to feed and foster that hatred, mixed with envy, which the rabble populace guards always so persistently towards the favourites of Kings or fortune.

Naturally quick and impatient, I cannot endure to move with calm and state along the roads. My postillions, my coachmen know it, driving in such fashion that no equipage is ever met which cleaves the air like mine.

I was descending one day the declivity of the Coeur-Volant, between Saint-Germain and Marly.

The Marquises de Maintenon and d'Hudicourt were in my carriage with M. le Duc du Maine, so far as I can remember. We were going at the pace which I have just told, and my outriders, who rode in advance, were clearing the way, as is customary. A vine-grower, laden with sticks, chose this moment to cross the road, thinking himself, no doubt, agile enough to escape my six horses. The cries of my people were useless. The imprudent fellow took his own course, and my postillions, in spite of their efforts with the reins, could not prevent themselves from passing over his body; the wheels followed the horses; the poor man was cut in pieces.

At the lamentations of the country folk and the horrified passers-by we stopped. Madame de Maintenon wished to alight, and when she perceived the unfortunate vine-grower disfigured with his wounds, she clasped her hands and fell to weeping. The Marquise d'Hudicourt, who was always simplicity itself, followed her friend's example; there was nothing but groans and sorrowful exclamations. My coachman blamed the postillions, the postillions the man's obstinacy.

Madame de Maintenon, speaking as though she were the mistress, bade them be silent, and dared to say to them before all the crowd: "If you belonged to me, I would soon settle you." At these words all the spectators applauded, and cried: "Vive Madame de Maintenon!"

Irritated at what I had just heard, I put my head out of the door, and, turning to these sentimental women, I said to them: "Be good enough to get in, mesdames; are you determined to have me stoned?"

They mounted again, after having left my purse with the poor relations of the dead man; and as far as Ruel, which was our destination, I was compelled to listen to their complaints and litanies.

"Admit, madam," I declared to Madame de Maintenon, "that any person except myself could and would detest you for the harm you have done me. Your part was to blame the postillions *lightly* and the rustic *very positively*. My equipage did not come unexpectedly, and my two outriders had signalled sufficiently from their horses.

"Madam," she replied, "you have not seen,

as I did, those eyes of the unhappy man forced violently from their sockets, his poor crushed head, his palpitating heart, from which the blood soaked the pavement; such a sight has moved and broken my own heart. I was, as I am still, quite beside myself, and, in such a situation, it is permissible to forget discretion in one's speech and the proprieties. I had no intention of giving you pain; I am distressed at having done so. But as for your coachmen I loathe them, and, since you undertake their defence, I shall not for the future show myself in your equipage." [1]

At Ruel, she dared take the same tone before the Duchesse de Richelieu, who rebuked her for officiousness, and out of spite, or some other reason, Madame de Maintenon refused to dine. She had two or three swooning fits; her tears started afresh four or five times, and the Marquise d'Hudicourt, who only dined by snatches, went into a corner to sob and weep along with her.

1 In one of her Letters, Madame de Maintenon speaks of this accident, but she does not give quite the same account of it. It is natural that Madame de Montespan seeks to excuse her people and herself if she can.— EDITOR'S NOTE.

"Admit, madam," I said then to Madame de Maintenon, "your excessive grief for an unknown man is singular. He was, perhaps, actually a dishonest fellow. The accident which you come back to incessantly, and which distresses me also, is doubtless deplorable, but, after all, it is not a murder, an ambush, a premeditated assassination. I imagine that if such a catastrophe had happened elsewhere, and been reported to us in a gazette or a book, you would have read of it with interest and commiseration; but we should not have seen you clasp your hands over your head, turn red and pale, utter loud cries, shed tears, sob, and scold a coachman, postillions, perhaps even me. The event would, nevertheless, be actually the same. Admit then, madam, and you too, Madame d'Hudicourt, that there is an exaggeration in your sorrow, and that you would have made, both of you, two excellent comedians."

Madame de Maintenon, piqued at these last words, sought to make us understand, and even make us admit, that there is a great difference between an event narrated to you by a third party, and an event which one has seen; Madame de

Richelieu shut her mouth pleasantly with these words: "We know, Madame la Marquise, how much eloquence and wit is yours. We approve all your arguments, past and to be. Let us speak no further of an accident which distresses you; and since you require to be diverted, let us go to the Opera, which is only two leagues off."

She consented to accompany us, for fear of proving herself entirely ridiculous; but to delay us as much as possible, she required a cup of chocolate, her favourite dish, her appetite having returned as soon as she had exhausted the possibilities of her grief.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES II., KING OF ENGLAND — HOW INTEREST CAN GIVE MEMORY — HIS GRIEVANCES AGAINST FRANCE — THE TWO DAUGHTERS OF THE DUKE OF YORK — WILLIAM OF ORANGE MARRIES ONE, IN SPITE OF THE OPPOSITION OF THE KING — GREAT JOY OF THE ALLIES — HOW THE KING OF ENGLAND UNDERSTANDS PEACE — SAYING OF THE KING — PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

THE King, Charles Stuart, who reigned in England since the death of the usurper, Cromwell, was a grandson of Henri IV., just as much as our King. Charles II. displayed the pronounced penchant of Henri IV. for the ladies and for pleasure; but he had neither his energy, nor his genial temper, nor his amiable frankness. Since the death of Henrietta of England, his beloved sister, he remained for some time longer our ally, but only to take great advantage from our union and alliance. He had made use of it against the Dutch, his naval and commercial rivals, and had

compelled them, by the aid of the King of France (then his friend), to reimburse him a sum of twenty-six millions, and to pay him, further, an annual tribute of twelve or fifteen thousand livres for the right of fishing round his island domains.

All these things being obtained, he seemed to recollect that Cardinal de Richelieu had not protected his father, Stuart; that the Cardinal Mazarin had declared for Cromwell in his triumph; that the Court of France had indecently gone into mourning for that robber; that there had been granted neither guards, nor palace, nor homages of State to the Queen, his mother, although daughter and sister of two French Kings; that this Queen, in a modest retirement—sometimes in a cell in the Convent of Chaillot, sometimes in her little pavilion at Colombes[1]—had died, poisoned by her physician, without the orator, Bossuet, having even frowned at it in the funeral oration;[2]

1 Colombes, above Courbevoye.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

2 Mademoiselle de Montpensier, in her Memoirs, says that this Queen, already languishing, had lost her sleep, and was given soporific pills, on account of which Henrietta of France awoke no more; but it is probable that the servants, and not the doctors, committed this blunder.

that the unfortunate Henrietta — daughter of this Queen and first wife of Monsieur—had succumbed to the horrible tortures of a poisoning even more visible and manifest; whilst her poisoners, who were well known, had never been in the least blamed or disgraced.

On all these arguments, with more or less foundation, Charles II. managed to conclude that he ought to detach himself from France, who was not helpful enough; and, by deserting us, he excited universal joy amongst his subjects, who were constantly jealous of us.

Charles Stuart had had children by his mistresses; he had had none by the Queen, his wife. The presumptive heir to the Crown was the Duke of York, His Majesty's only brother.

The Duke of York, son-in-law — as I have noticed already — of our good Chancellor, Lord Hyde, had himself only two daughters, equally beautiful, who, according to the laws of those islanders, would bear the sceptre in turn.

Our King, who read in the future, was thinking of marrying these two Princesses conformably with our interests, when the Prince of Orange

crossed the sea and went formally to ask the hand of the elder of his uncle.

Informed of this proceeding, the King at once sent M. de Croissy-Colbert to the Duke of York, to induce him to interfere and refuse his daughter; but, in royal families, it is always the head who makes and decides marriages. William of Orange obtained his charming cousin Mary, and acquired that day the expectation of the Protestant throne, which was his ambition.

At the news of this marriage, the allies, that is to say, all the King's enemies, had an outburst of satisfaction, and gave themselves up to puerile jubilations. The King of Great Britain stood definitely on their side; he made common cause with them, and soon there appeared in the political world an audacious document signed by this Prince, in which, from the retreat of his island, the empire of fogs, he dared to demand peace from Louis of Bourbon, his ancient ally and his cousin-german, imposing on him the most revolting conditions.

According to the English Monarch, France *ought* to restore to the Spaniards, first Sicily, and,

further, the towns of Charleroi, Ath, Courtrai, Condé, Saint-Guilain, Tournai and Valenciennes, as a condition of retaining Franche-Comté; moreover, France was compelled to give up Lorraine to the Duke Charles, and places in German Alsace to the Emperor.

The King replied that "*too much was too much.*" He referred the decision of his difficulties to the fortune of war, and collected fresh soldiers.

Then, without further delay, England and the States-General signed a particular treaty at La Hague, to constrain France (or, rather, her ruler) to accept the propositions that his pride refused to hear.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT MADEMOISELLE BUYS CHOISY — THE PRESIDENT GONTHIER — THE INDEMNITY — THE SALMON — THE HARANGUE AS IT IS NOT DONE IN THE ACADEMY.

THE King had only caused against his own desire the extreme grief which Mademoiselle felt at the imprisonment of Lauzun. His Majesty was sensible of the wisdom of the resolution which she had made not to break with the Court, and to show herself at Saint-Germain, or at Versailles, from time to time, as her rank, her near kinship, her birth demanded. He said to me one day: "My cousin is beginning to look up. I see with pleasure that her complexion is clearing, that she laughs willingly at this and that, and that her good-will for me is restored. I am told that she is occupied in building a country-house above Vitry. Let us go to-day and surprise her, and see what this house of Choisy is like."

We arrived at a sufficiently early hour, and had time to see everything. The King found the situation most agreeable; those lovely gardens united high up above the Seine, those woods full of broad walks, of light and air, those points of view happily chosen and arranged, gave a charming effect; the house, of one storey, raised on steps of sixteen stairs, appeared to us elegant from its novelty; but the King blamed his cousin for not having put a little architecture and ornament on the façade.

"Princes," said he, "have no right to be careless; since universal agreement has made us Highnesses, we must know how to carry our burden, and to lay it down at no time, and in no place."

Mademoiselle excused herself on the ground of her remoteness from the world, and on the expense, which she wished to keep down.

"From the sight of the country," said the King, "you must have a hundred to a hundred and twelve acres here."

"A hundred and nine," she answered.

"Have you paid dear for this property?" went

on the King. "It is the President Gonthier who has sold it?"

"I paid for this site, and the old house which no longer exists, forty thousand livres," she said.

"Forty thousand livres," cried the King. "Oh, my cousin, there is such a thing as conscience! You have not paid for the ground. I was assured that poor President Gonthier had only got rid of his house at Choisy because his affairs were embarrassed; you must indemnify him, or rather I will indemnify him myself, by giving him a pension."

Mademoiselle bit her lip, and added:

"The President asked sixty thousand[1] first; my men of business offered him forty, and he accepted it."

Mademoiselle has no generosity, although she is immensely rich; she pretended not to hear, and it was M. Colbert who sent *by order* the twenty thousand livres to the President.

Mademoiselle, vain and petty, as though she were a *bourgeoise* of yesterday, showed us her

1 Two hundred and forty thousand francs at present day.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

gallery, where she had already collected the selected portraits of all her ancestors, relations and kindred; she pointed out to us in her winter *salon* the portrait of the little Comte de Toulouse, painted, not as an admiral, but as God of the Sea, floating on a pearl shell; and his brother the Duc du Maine, as Colonel-general of the Swiss and Grisons. The full-length portrait of the King was visible on three chimney-pieces; she was at great pains to make a merit of it, and call for thanks.

Having followed her into her State-chamber, where she had stolen in privately, I saw that she was taking away the portrait of Lauzun. I went and told it to the King, who shrugged his shoulders and fell to laughing.

"She is fifty-two years old," he said to me.

A very pretty collation of *confitures* and fruits was served us, to which the King prayed her to add a *ragoût* of peas and a roasted fowl.

During the repast, he said to her: "For the rest, I have not noticed the portrait of Gaston, your father; is it a distraction on my part, or an omission on yours?"

"It will be put there later," she answered. "It is not time."

"What! your father!" added the King. "You do not think that, cousin!"

"All my actions," added the Princess, "are weighed in the balance beforehand; if I was to exhibit the portrait of my father at the head of these various pictures, I should have to put my step-mother, his wife, there too, as a necessary pendant. The harm which she has done me does not permit of that complacence. One only opens one's house to one's friends."

"Your step-mother has never done you any other harm," replied the King, "than to reclaim for her children the funds or the furniture left by your father. The character of Margaret of Lorraine has always been sweetness itself; seeing your irritation, she begged me to arbitrate myself; and you know all that M. Colbert and the Chancellor did to satisfy you under the circumstances. But let us speak of something else, and cease these discussions. I have a service to ask of you; here is M. le Duc du Maine already big; everybody knows of your affection for him, and I have seen

his portrait with pleasure, in one of your saloons. I am going to establish him; would it be agreeable to you if I give him your livery?"

"M. le Duc du Maine," said the Princess, "is the type of what is gracious, and noble, and beautiful; he can only do honour to my livery; I grant it him with all my heart, since you do me the favour of desiring it. Would I were in a position to do more for him!"

The King perfectly understood these last words; he made no reply to them, but he understood all that he was meant to understand. We went down again into the gardens.

The fishermen of Choisy had just caught a salmon of enormous size, which they had been pursuing for four or five days; they had intended to offer it to Mademoiselle; the presence of the King inspired them with another design. They wove with great diligence a large and pretty basket of reeds, garnished it with foliage, young grass and flowers, and came and presented their salmon to the King, all leaping in the basket.

The fisherman charged with the address only uttered a few words; they were quite evidently

improvised, so that they gave more pleasure and effect than those of academicians, or persons of importance. The fisherman expressed himself thus:

"You have brought us good fortune, Sire, by your presence, as you bring fortune to your generals. You arrive on the Monday; on the Tuesday the town is taken. We come to offer to the greatest of Kings the greatest salmon that can be caught."

The King desired this speech to be instantly transcribed; and after having bountifully rewarded the sailors, His Majesty said to Mademoiselle:

"This man was born to be a wit; if he were younger, I would place him in a college. There is wit at Choisy in every rank of life."

CHAPTER VI

DEPARTURE OF THE KING—GHENT REDUCED IN FIVE DAYS—TAKING OF YPRES—PEACE SIGNED—THE PRINCE OF ORANGE IS AT PAINS NOT TO KNOW OF IT—HORRIBLE CRUELTIES.

I HAVE related in what manner Charles II., suddenly pronouncing in favour of his nephew, the Prince of Orange, had signed a league with his old enemies, the Dutch, in order to counteract the success of the King of France and compel him to sign a humiliating and entirely inadmissible peace.

The King left Versailles suddenly on the 4th of February, 1678, taking, with his whole Court, the road to Lorraine, while waiting for the troops which had wintered on the frontiers, and were investing at once Luxembourg, Charlemont, Namur, Mons and Ypres, five of the strongest and best provisioned places in the Low-Countries. By this march and manœuvre, he wished to hoodwink the

allied generals, who were very far from imagining that Ghent was the point towards which the Conqueror's intentions were directed.

In effect, hardly had the King seen them occupied in preparing the defence of the above-named places, when, leaving the Queen and the ladies in the agreeable town of Metz, he rapidly traversed sixty leagues of country, and laid siege to the town of Ghent, which was scarcely expecting him.

The Spanish Governor, Don Francisco de Pardo, having but a weak garrison and little artillery, decided upon releasing the waters and inundating the country; but certain heights remained which could not be covered, and from here the French artillery started to storm the ramparts and the fort.

The siege was commenced on the 4th of March; upon the 9th the town opened its gates, and two days later the citadel. Ypres was carried at the end of a week, in spite of the most obstinate resistance. Our grenadiers performed prodigies, and lost all their officers, without exception. I lost there one of my nephews, the one hope of his

family; my compliments to the King, therefore, were soon made.

He went to Versailles to take back the Queen, and returned to Ghent with the speed and promptitude of lightning. The same evening he sent an order to a detachment of the garrison of Maestricht to hasten and seize the town and citadel of Leuwe, in Brabant, which was executed on the instant. It was then that the Dutch sent their deputation, charged to plead for a suspension of hostilities for six weeks. The King granted it, although these blunderers hardly merited it. They undertook that Spain should join them in the peace, and finally, after some difficulties, settled more or less rightly, the treaty was signed on the 10th of August, just as the six weeks were about to expire.

The Prince of Orange, naturally bellicose, and, above all things, passionately hostile to France, pretended to ignore the existence of this peace, which he disapproved. The Maréchal de Luxembourg, informed of the treaty, gave himself up to the security of the moment; he was actually at table with his numerous officers when he was warned that the Prince of Orange was advancing

against him. The alarm was quickly sounded; such troops and cavalry as could be were assembled, and a terrible action ensued.

At first we were repulsed, but soon the Maréchal rallied his men; he excited their indignation by exposing to them the atrocity of M. d'Orange, and after a terrible massacre, in which two thousand English bit the dust, the Maréchal de Luxembourg remained master of the field.

He was victorious, but in this unfortunate action we lost, ourselves, the entire regiment of guards, that of Feuquières, and several others besides, with an incredible quantity of officers, killed or wounded.

The name of the Prince of Orange, since that day, was held in horror in both armies, and he would have fallen into disgrace with the States-General themselves had it not been for the protection of the King of England, to whom the Dutch were greatly bound.

On the following day, this monster sent a parliamentary officer to the French generals to inform them that *during the night official news of the peace had reached him.*

CHAPTER VII

MISSION OF MADAME DE MAINTENON TO CHOISY — MADEMOISELLE GIVES THE PRINCIPALITIES OF EU AND DOMBES IN EXCHANGE FOR M. DE LAUZUN—HE IS SET AT LIBERTY.

THE four or five words which had escaped Mademoiselle de Montpensier had remained in the King's recollection. He said to me: "If you had more patience, and a sweeter and more pliant temper, I would employ you to go and have a little talk with Mademoiselle, in order to induce her to explain what intentions she may have relative to my son."

"I admit, Sire," I answered him, "that I am not the person required for affairs of that sort. Your cousin is proud and cutting; I would not endure what she has made others endure. I cannot accept such a commission. But Madame de

Maintenon, who is gentleness itself, is suitable — no one more so — for this mission; she is at once insinuating and respectful, she is attached to the Duc du Maine. The interests of my son could not be in better hands."

The King agreed with me, and both he and I begged the Marquise to conduct M. du Maine to Choisy.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier received him with rapture. He thanked her for what she had done for him, in granting him her colours, and upon that Mademoiselle asked his permission to embrace him, and to tell him how amiable and worthy of belonging to the King she found him. She led him to the hall, in which he was to be seen represented as a Colonel-general of Swiss.

"I have always loved the Swiss," she said, "because of their great bravery, their fidelity and their excellent discipline. The Maréchal de Bassompierre made this corps the perfection which it is; it is for you, my cousin, to maintain it."

She passed into another apartment, where she was to be seen represented as Bellona. Two Loves were presenting her, one with his helm

adorned with martial plumes, the other with his buckler of gold, with the Orléans-Montpensier arms. The laurel crown with which Triumphs were ornamenting her head, and the scaled cuirass of Pallas completed her decoration. M. le Duc du Maine praised, without affectation, the intelligence of the artist; and as for the figure and the likeness, he said to the Princess: "You are good, but *you* are better." The calm and the *naïveté* of this compliment made Mademoiselle shed tears. Her emotion was visible; she embraced my son anew.

"You have brought him up perfectly," she said to Madame de Maintenon. "His urbanity is of good origin; that is how a King's son ought to act and speak."

"His Majesty," said Madame de Maintenon, "has been enchanted with your country-house; he spoke of it all the evening. He even added that you had ordered it all yourself, without an architect, and that M. le Notre would not have done better."

"M. le Notre," replied the Princess, "came here for a little; he wanted to cut and destroy,

and upset and disarrange, as with the King at Versailles. But I am of a different mould to my cousin; I am not to be surprised with big words. I saw that Le Notre thought only of expenditure and tyranny; I thanked him for his good intentions, and prayed him not to put himself out for me. I found here thickets already made, of an indescribable charm; he wanted, on the instant, to clear them away, so that one could testify that all this new park was his. If you please, madam, tell His Majesty that M. le Notre is the sworn enemy of Nature; that he only sees the pleasures of proprietorship in the future, and promises us cover and shade just at that epoch of our life when we shall only ask for sunshine in which to warm ourselves."

She next led her guests towards the large apartments. When she had come to her bedroom, she showed the Marquise the mysterious portrait, and asked if she recognised it.

"Ah, my God! 'tis himself!" said Madame de Maintenon at once — "he sees, he breathes, he regards us; one might believe one heard him speak. Why do you give yourself this torture?"

continued the ambassadress. "The continual presence of an unhappy and beloved being feeds your grief, and this grief insensibly undermines you. In your place, Princess, I should put him elsewhere until a happier and more favourable hour."

"That hour will never come," cried Mademoiselle.

"Pardon me," resumed Madame de Maintenon; "the King is never inhuman and inexorable; you should know that better than anyone. He punishes only against the protests of his heart, and, as soon as he can relent without impropriety or danger, he pardons. M. de Lauzun, by refusing haughtily the Marshal's bâton, which was offered him in despite of his youth, deeply offended the King, and the disturbance he allowed himself to make at Madame de Montespan's depicted him as a dangerous and wrong-headed man. Those are his sins. Rest assured, Princess, that I am well informed. But as I know, at the same time, that the King was much attached to him—and is still so, to some extent—and that a captivity of ten years is a rough school, I have the assurance that Your Highness will not be thought

importunate if you make to-day some slight attempt towards a clemency."

"I will do everything they like," Mademoiselle de Montpensier said then; "but shall I have anyone near His Majesty to assist and support my undertaking? I have no more trust in Madame de Montespan; she has betrayed us, she will betray us again; the offence of M. de Lauzun is always present in her memory, and she is a lady who does not easily forgive. As for you, madam, I know that the King considers you for the invaluable services of the education given to his children. Deign to speak and act in favour of my unhappy husband, and I will make you a present of one of my fine titled territories."

Madame de Maintenon was too acute to accept anything in such a case; she answered the Princess that her generosities, to please the King, should be offered to M. le Duc du Maine, and that, by assuring a part of her succession to that young Prince, she had a sure method of moving the Monarch, and of turning his paternal gratitude to the most favourable concessions. The Princess, enchanted, then said to the negotiatrix:

"Be good enough to inform His Majesty, this evening, that I offer to give, at once, to his dear and amiable child the County of Eu and my Sovereignty of Dombes, adding the revenues to them if it is necessary."

Madame de Maintenon, who worships her pupil, kissed the hand of Mademoiselle and promised to return and see her immediately.

That very evening she gave an account to the King of her embassy; she solicited the liberty of the Marquis de Lauzun, and the King commenced by granting "*the authorisation of mineral waters.*"

Meanwhile, Mademoiselle, presented by Madame de Maintenon, went to take counsel with the King. She made a formal donation of the two principalities which I have named. His Majesty, out of courtesy, left her the revenues, and, in fine, she was permitted to marry her M. de Lauzun, and to assure him, by contract, fifty thousand livres of income.[1]

1 Two hundred thousand francs to-day.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

CHAPTER VIII

M. DE BRISACIER AND KING CASIMIR—ONE IS NEVER SO WELL PRAISED AS BY ONESELF—HE IS SENT TO GET HIMSELF MADE A DUKE ELSEWHERE.

THE Abbé de Brisacier, the famous director of consciences, possessed enough friends and credit to advance young Brisacier, his nephew, to the Queen's household, to whom he had been made private secretary. Slanderers or impostors had persuaded this young coxcomb that Casimir, the King of Poland, whilst dwelling in Paris, in the quality of a simple gentleman, had shown himself most assiduous to Madame Brisacier, and that he, Brisacier of France, was born of these assiduities of the Polish Prince.

When he saw the Comte Casimir raised to the elective throne of Poland, he considered himself as the issue of royal blood, and it seemed to him that his position with the Queen, Marie Thérèse, was a great injustice of fortune; he thought, nevertheless,

that he ought to remain some time longer in this post of inferiority, in order to use it as a ladder of ascent. The Queen wrote quantities of letters to different countries, and especially to Spain, but never, or hardly ever, in her own hand. One day, whilst handling all this correspondence for the Princess's signature, the private secretary slipped one in, addressed to Casimir, the Polish King.

In this letter, which from one end to the other, sang the praises of the Seigneur Brisacier, the Queen had the extreme kindness to remind the Northern Monarch of his old liaison *with the respectable mother of the young man*, and Her Majesty begged the Prince to solicit from the King of France, the title and rank of Duke for *so excellent a subject.*

King Casimir was not, as one knows, distrust and prudence personified; he walked blindfold into the trap; he wrote with his royal hand to his brother, the King of France, and asked him a brevet as Duke for young Brisacier. Our King, who did not throw duchies at people's heads, read and re-read the strange missive with astonishment and suspicion. He wrote in his turn to the

suppliant King, and begged him to send him the why and the wherefore of this hieroglyphic adventure. The good Prince, ignorant of ruses, sent the letter of the Queen herself.

Had this Princess ever given any reason to be talked about, there is no doubt that she would have been lost on this occasion; but there was nothing to excite suspicion. The King, no less, approached her with precaution, in order to observe the first results of her answers.

"Madam," he said, "are you still quite satisfied with young Brisacier, your private secretary?"

"More or less," replied the Infanta; "a little light, a little absent; but, on the whole, a good enough young man."

"Why have you recommended him to the King of Poland, instead of recommending him to me directly?"

"To the King of Poland!—I? I have not written to him since I congratulated him on his succession."

"Then, madam, you have been deceived in this matter, since I have your last letter in my hands. Here it is; I return it to you."

The Princess read the letter with attention; her astonishment was immense.

"My signature has been taken by surprise," she said; "Brisacier alone can be guilty, being the only one interested."

This new kind of ambitious man was summoned; he was easily confounded. The King ordered him to prison, wishing to frighten him for a punishment, and at the end of some days he was commanded to quit France and go and be made Duke somewhere else.

This event threw such ridicule upon pretenders to the ducal state, that I no longer dared speak further to the King of the hopes which he had held out to me; moreover, the things which supervened left me quite convinced of the small success which would attend my efforts.

CHAPTER IX

COMPLIMENT FROM MONSIEUR TO THE NEW PRINCE DE DOMBES — ROMAN HISTORY — THE EMPERORS TRAJAN, MARCUS AURELIUS AND VERUS — THE DANGER OF ERUDITION.

MONSIEUR, having learnt what his cousin of Montpensier had just done for my Duc du Maine, felt all possible grief and envy at it. He had always looked to inherit from her, and the harshest enemy whom M. de Lauzun met with at his wedding was, undoubtedly, Monsieur. When M. le Duc du Maine received the congratulations of all the Court on the ground of his new dignity of Prince de Dombes, his uncle was the last to appear; even so he could not refrain from making him hear these disobliging words — who would believe it?—"*If I, too, were to give you my congratulation, it would be scarcely sincere; what will be left for my children?*"

Madame de Maintenon, who is never at a loss,

replied: "There will be left always, Monseigneur, *the remembrance of your virtues;* that is a fair enough inheritance."

We complained of it to the King; he reprimanded him in a fine fashion. "I gave you a condition so considerable," said he, "that the Queen, our mother, herself thought it exaggerated and dangerous in your hands. You have no liking for my children, although you feign a passionate affection for their father; the result of your misbehaviour will be that I shall grow cool to your line, and that your daughter, however beautiful and amiable she may be, will not marry my Dauphin."

At this threat Monsieur was quite overcome, and anxious to make his apologies to the King; he assured him of his tender affection for M. le Duc du Maine, and would give him to understand that Madame de Maintenon had misunderstood him.

"It is not from her that your compliment came to us; it is from M. le Duc du Maine, who is uprightness itself, and whose mouth has never lied."

Monsieur then started playing at distraction

and puerility; the medal-case was standing opened, his gaze was turned to it. Then he came to me and said in a whisper: "*I pray you, come and look at the coin of Marcus-Aurelius; do you not find that the King resembles that Emperor in every feature?*"

"You are joking," I answered him. "His Majesty is as much like him as you are like me."

He insisted, and his brother, who witnessed our argument, wished to know the reason. When he understood, he said to Monsieur: "Madame de Montespan is right; I am not in the least like that Roman Prince in face. The one to whom I should wish to be like in merit is Trajan."

"Trajan had fine qualities," replied Monsieur; "that does not prevent me from preferring Marcus Aurelius."

"*On what grounds?*" asked His Majesty.

"On the grounds that he shared his throne with Verus," replied Monsieur, unhesitatingly.

The King flushed at this reply, and answered in few words: "Marcus Aurelius' action to his brother may be called *generous;* it was none the less *inconsiderate.* By his own confession, the Emperor Verus proved, by his debauchery and his

vices, unworthy of the honour which had been done him. Happily, he died from his excesses during the Pannonian War, and Marcus Aurelius could only do well from that day on."

Monsieur, annoyed with his erudition and confused at his escapade, sought to change the conversation. The King, passing into his cabinet, left him entirely in my charge. I scolded him for his inconsequences, and he dared to implore me to put his daughter "in the right way" to become one day Queen of France by marrying Monsieur le Dauphin, whom she loved already with her whole heart.

CHAPTER X

THE BENEDICTINES OF FONTEVRAULT — THE HEAD IN THE BASIN — THE UNFORTUNATE DELIVERY — THE BAPTISM OF THE MONSTER — THE COURAGEOUS MARRIAGE — FOUNDATION OF THE ROYAL ABBEY OF FONTEVRAULT.

Two or three days after our arrival at Fontevrault, the King, who loves to know all the geographical details of important places, asked me of the form and particulars of the celebrated abbey. I gave him a natural description of it.

"They are two vast communities," I told him, "which the founder, for some inexplicable whim, united in one domain, of an extent which astonishes the imagination.

"The Community of Benedictine Nuns is regarded as the first, because of the abbotorial dignity it possesses. The Community of Benedictine Monks is only second; a fact which surprises

greatly strangers and visitors. Both in the monastery and the convent the buildings are huge and magnificent, the courts spacious, the woods and streams well distributed and well kept.

"Every morning you may see a hundred and fifty to two hundred ploughs issue from both establishments; these spread over the plain and till an immense expanse of land. Carts drawn by bullocks, big mules or superb horses, are ceaselessly exporting the products of the fields, the meadows or the orchards. Innumerable cows cover the pastures, and legions of women and herds are employed to look after these estates.

"The aspect of Fontevrault gives an exact idea of the ancient homes of the Patriarchs, in their remote periods of early civilisation, which saw the great proprietors delighting in their natal hearth, and finding their glory, as well as their happiness, in fertilising or assisting Nature.

"The abbess rules like a sovereign over her companion nuns, and over the monks her neighbours. She appoints their officers and their temporal prince. It is she who admits postulants, who fixes the dates of ordinations, pronounces inter-

dictions, graces and penances. They render her an account of their administration and the employment of their revenues, from which she subtracts carefully her third share, as the essential right of her crosier of authority."

"Have you invited the Benedictine Fathers to your fête in the wood?" the King asked me, smiling.

"We had no power, Sire," I answered. "There are many young ladies being educated with the nuns of Fontevrault. The parents of these young ladies, respectful as they are to these monks, would have looked askance at the innovation. The fathers never go in there. They are to be seen at the abbey church, where they sing and say their offices. Only the three secular chaplains of the abbess penetrate into the house of the nuns; the youngest of the three cannot be less than fifty.

"The night of the feast the monks draw near our cloister by means of a wooden theatre, which forms a terrace, and from this elevation they participate by the eye and ear in our amusements; that is enough."

"Has Madame de Mortemart ever related to

you the origin of her abbey?" resumed the King. "Perhaps she is ignorant of it. I am going to tell you of it, for it is extremely curious; it is not as it is related in the books, and I take the facts from good authority. Your must hear of it, and you will see.

"There was once a Comtesse de Poitiers, named Honorinde, to whom fate had given for a husband the greatest hunter in the world. This man would have willingly passed his life in the woods, where he hunted, night and day, what we call, in hunter's parlance, 'big game.' Having won the victory over a monstrous boar, he cut off the head himself, and this quivering and bleeding mask he went to offer to his lady in a basin. The young woman was in the first month of her pregnancy. She was filled with repugnance and fright at the sight of this still-threatening head; it troubled her to the prejudice of her fruit.

"Eight, or seven and a half, months afterwards, she brought into the world a girl who was human in her whole body, but above had the horrible head of a wild boar! Imagine what cries, what grief, what despair! The curé of the place

refused baptism, and the Comte, broken down and desolate, ordered the child to be drowned.

"Instead of throwing it into the water, his servant scrupulously went straight to the monastery where your sister rules. He laid down his closed packet in the church of the monks, and then returned to his lord, who never had any other child.

"The religious Benedictines, not knowing whence this monster came, believed there was some prodigy in it. They baptised in this little person all that was not boar, and left the surplus to Providence. They brought up the singular creature in the greatest secrecy; it drank and lapped after the manner of its kind. As it grew up it walked on its feet, and that without the least imperfection; it could sit down, go on its knees, and even make a curtsey. But it never articulated any distinct words, and it had always a harsh and rough voice which howled and grunted. Its intelligence never reached the knowledge of reading or writing; but it understood easily all that could be said to it, and the proof was that it replied by its actions.

"The Comte de Poitiers having died whilst hunting, Honorinde learnt of her old serving-man in what refuge, in what asylum, he had long ago deposited the little one. This good mother proceeded there, and the monks, after some hesitation, confessed what had become of it. She wished to see it; they showed it her. At its aspect she felt the same inward commotion which had, years before, perverted nature. She groaned, fainted, burst into tears, and never had the courage and firmness to embrace what she had seen.

"Her gratitude was not less lively and sincere; she handed a considerable sum to the Benedictines of Fontevrault, charging them to continue their good work and charity.

"The reverend Prior, reflecting that his hideous inmate came of a great family, and of a family of great property, resolved to procure it as a wife for his nephew. He sounded the young man, who looked fixedly at his future bride, and avowed that he was satisfied.

"'She is a good Christian,' he replied to his uncle, 'since you have baptised her here. She is of a good family, since Honorinde has recognised

her. There are many as ugly as she is to be seen who still find husbands. I will put a pretty mask on her, and the mask will give me sufficient illusion. Bénédicte, so far as she goes, is well-made; I hope to have fine children who will talk.'

"The Prior commenced by marrying them; he then confided in Honorinde, who, not daring to noise abroad this existence, was compelled to submit to what had been done.

"The marriage of the young she-monster was not happy. She bit her husband from morning to night. She did not know how to sit at table, and would only eat out of a trough. She needed neither an arm-chair, a sofa nor a couch; she stretched herself out on the sand or on the pavement.

"Her husband, in despair, demanded the nullification of his marriage; and as the courts did not proceed fast enough for his impatience, he killed his companion, Bénédicte, with a pistol-shot, at the moment when she was biting and tearing him before witnesses.

"Honorinde had her buried at Fontevrault, and over her tomb, at the end of the year, she built

a convent, to which her immense property was given, where she retired herself as a simple nun, and of which she was appointed first abbess by the Pope who reigned at the time.

"There, madam," added the King, "is the somewhat singular origin of the illustrious abbey which your sister rules with such *éclat*. You must have remarked the boar's head, perfectly imitated in sculpture, in the dome; that mask is the speaking history of the noble community of Fontevrault, where more than a hundred Benedictine monks obey an abbess."

CHAPTER XI

FINE COUPLES MAKE FINE CHILDREN—THE DAUPHINE OF BAVARIA—SHE DISPLEASES MADAME DE MONTESPAN—FIRST *DÉBUT* RELATING TO MADAME DE MAINTENON, APPOINTED LADY-IN-WAITING—CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE TWO MARQUISES.

THE King, in his moments of effusion and abandonment (then so full of pleasantness), had said more than once: "If I have any physical beauty, I owe it to the Queen, my mother; if my daughters have any beauty, they owe it to me: it is only fine couples who get fine children."

When I saw him decided upon marrying Monseigneur le Dauphin, I reminded him of his maxim. He fell to smiling, and answered me: "Chance, too, sometimes works its miracles. My choice for my son is a decided thing; my politics come before my taste, and I have asked for the daughter of the Elector of Bavaria, whose portrait I will show you. She is not beautiful, like you;

she is prettier than Bénédicte, and I hope that she will not bite Monseigneur le Dauphin in her capricious transports."

The portrait that the King showed me was a flattering one, as are, in general, all these preliminary samples. For all that, the Princess seemed to me hideous, and even disagreeable, especially about her eyes, that portion of the face which confirms the physiognomy and decides everything.

"Monseigneur will never love that woman," I said to the King. "That constrained look in the pupil, those drooping eyes—they make my heart ache."

"My son, happily," His Majesty answered, "is not so difficult as you and I. He has already seen this likeness, and at the second look he was taken; and as we have assured him that the young person is well made, he cries quits with her face, and proposes to love her as soon as he gets her."

"God grant it!" I added; and the King told me, more or less in detail, of what important personages he was going to compose his household. The eternal Abbé Bossuet was to become first chap-

lain, as being the tutor-in-chief to the Dauphin; the Duchesse de Richelieu, for her great name, was going to be lady-of-honour; and the two posts of ladies-in-waiting were destined for the Marquise de Rochefort, wife of the Marshal, and for Madame de Maintenon, ex-governess of the Duc du Maine. The gesture of disapproval which escaped me gave His Majesty pain.

"Why this air of contempt or aversion?" he said, changing colour. "Is it to the Maréchale de Rochefort or the Marquise de Maintenon that you object? I esteem both the one and the other, and I am sorry for you if you do not esteem them too."

"The Maréchale de Rochefort," I replied, without taking any fright, "is aged and almost always sick; a lady-of-honour having her appearance will make a contrast with her office. As to the other, she still has beauty and elegance; but do you imagine, Sire, that the Court of Bavaria and the Court of France have forgotten, in so short a time, the pleasant and burlesque name of the poet Scarron?"

"Everyone ought to forget what I have for-

gotten," replied the King, "and what my gratitude will not and cannot forget I am surprised that you, madam, should take pleasure in forgetting."

"She has taken care of my children since the cradle, I admit it with pleasure," said I to His Majesty, without changing my tone; "you have given her a Marquisate for recompense, and a superb hotel completely furnished at Versailles. I do not see that she has any cause for complaint, nor that after such bounty there is more to add."

"Of eight children that you have brought into the world, madam, she has reared and attended perfectly to six," replied the King. "The estate of Maintenon has, at the most, recompensed the education of the Comtes de Vexin, whose childhood was so onerous. And for the remainder of my little family, what have I yet done that deserves mention?"

"Give her a second estate and money," I cried, quite out of patience, "since it is money which pays all services of that nature; but what need have you to raise her to great office, and keep her at Court? She dotes, she says, on her old château of Maintenon; do not deprive her of this

delight. By making her lady-in-waiting, you would be disobliging her."

"*She will accept out of courtesy*," he said to me, putting on an air of mockery. And as the time for the Council was noted by him on my clock, he went away without adding more.

Since M. le Duc du Maine had grown up, and Mademoiselle de Nantes had been confided to the Marquise de Montchevreuil, Madame de Maintenon continued to occupy her handsome apartment on the Princes' Court. There she received innumerable visits, she paid assiduous court to the Queen, who had suddenly formed a taste for her, and took her on her walks and her visits to the communities; but this new Marquise saw me rarely. Since the affair of the vine-grower, killed on the road, she declared that I had insulted her before everybody, and that I had ordered her *imperiously* to return to my carriage, as though she had been a waiting-maid, or some other menial. Her excessive sensibility readily afforded her this pretext, so that she neglected and visibly overlooked me.

As she did not come to me, I betook myself to

her at a tolerably early hour, before the flood of visitors, and started her on the history of the lady-in-waiting.

"His Majesty has spoken of it to me," she said, "as of a thing possible; but I do not think there is anything settled yet in the matter."

"Will you accept," I asked her, "supposing the King to insist?"

"I should like a hundred times better," she replied, "to go and live in independence in my little kingdom of Maintenon, and with my own hands gather on my walls those velvet, brilliant peaches, which grow so fine in those districts. But if the King commands me to remain at Court, and form our young Bavarian Princess in the manners of this country, have I the right, in good conscience, to refuse?"

"Your long services have gained you the right to desire and take your retirement," I said to her; "in your place, I should insist upon the necessities of my health. And the Court of France will not fall nor change its physiognomy, even if a German or Iroquoise Dauphine should curtsey awry, or in bad taste."

Madame de Maintenon began to laugh, and assured me that "her post as lady-in-waiting would be an *actual burden*, if the King had destined her for it in spite of herself, and there should be no means of withdrawing from it."

At this speech I saw clearly that things were already fixed. Not wishing to call upon me the reproaches of my lord, I carried the conversation no further.

CHAPTER XII

THE "POWDER OF INHERITANCE" — THE *CHAMBRE ARDENTE*—THE COMTESSE DE SOISSONS' ARREST DECREED — THE MARQUISE DE MONTESPAN BUYS HER SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE QUEEN'S COUNCIL—MADAME DE SOUBISE—MADAME DE MAINTENON AND THE KING.

AT the time of the poisonings committed by Madame de Brinvilliers, the Government obtained evidence that a powder, called "the powder of inheritance," was being sold in Paris, by means of which impatient heirs shortened the days of unfortunate holders, and entered into possession before their time.

Two obscure women, called *La Vigoureuse* and *La Voisine*, were arrested, having been caught red-handed. Submitted to the question, they confessed their crime, and mentioned several persons, whom they qualified as "having bought and made use of the said *powder of inheritance*."

We saw suddenly the arrest of the Maréchal

de Luxembourg, the Princesse de Tingry, and many others. The *Chambre Ardente*[1] issued a warrant also to seize the person of the Duchesse de Bouillon and the Comtesse de Soissons, the celebrated nieces of the Cardinal Mazarin, sisters-in-law, both, of my niece de Nevers, who was dutifully afflicted thereby.

The Comtesse de Soissons had possessed hitherto an important office, whose functions suited me in every respect—that of the superintendence of the Queen's household and council. I bought this post at a considerable price. The Queen, who had never cared for the Comtesse, did me the honour of assuring me that she *preferred me to the other*, when I came to take my oath in her presence.

Madame la Princesse de Rohan-Soubise had wished to supplant me at that time, and I was aware of her constant desire to obtain a fine post at Court. She *loved* the King, who had shown her his favours in more than one circumstance; but, as she had a place neither in his esteem nor in his affection, I did not fear her. I despatched to her, very adroitly, a person of her acquaintance, who spoke to her of the new household of a

1 The French Star Chamber.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

Dauphine, and gave her the idea of soliciting for herself the place of lady-in-waiting, destined for Madame de Maintenon.

The Princesse de Soubise put herself immediately amongst the candidates. She wrote to the King, *her friend*, a pressing and affectionate letter, to which he did not even reply. She wrote one next in a more majestic and appropriate style. It was notified to her that she was forbidden to reappear at Court. The Prince had resolutely taken his course. He wished to put Madame de Maintenon in evidence, and what he has once decided he abandons never.

I was soon aware that costumes of an unheard-of magnificence were being executed for the Marquise. Gold, silver, precious stones abounded. I was offered a secret view of her robe of ceremony, with a long mantle train. I saw this extraordinarily rich garment, and was sorry in advance for the young stranger, whose lady-in-waiting could not fail to eclipse her in everything.

I then put some questions to myself—asked myself severely if my disapproval sprang from natural haughtiness, which would have been pos-

sible, and even excusable, or whether, mingled with all that, was some little agitation of jealousy and emulation.

I collected together a crowd of slight and scattered circumstances; and in this union of several small facts, at first neglected and almost unperceived, I distinguished on the part of the King a gradual and increasing attachment for the governess, and at the same time a negligence in regard to me—a coldness, a cooling-down, at least, and that sort of familiarity, close parent of weariness, which comes to sight in the midst of courtesies and attentions the most satisfying and the most frequent.

The King, in the old days, never glanced towards my clock till as late as possible, and always at the last moment, at the last extremity. Now he cast his eyes on it a score of times in half-an-hour. He contradicted me about trifles. He explained to me ingeniously the faults, or alleged faults, of my temper and character. If it was a question of Madame de Maintenon, she was of a birth equal and almost superior to the rest of the Court. He forgot himself so far as to quote before

me the subtilty of her answers or the delight of her most intimate conversation. Did he wish to describe a noble carriage, an attitude at once easy and distinguished, it was Madame de Maintenon's. She possessed this, she possessed that, she possessed everything.

Soon there was not the slightest doubt left to me; and I knew, as did the whole Court, that he openly visited the Marquise, and was glad to pass some moments there.

These things, in truth, never lacked some plausible pretext, and he chose the time when Madame de Montchevreuil and Mademoiselle de Nantes were presenting their homages to Madame de Maintenon.

CHAPTER XIII

MARIE LOUISE, DAUGHTER OF HENRIETTA OF ENGLAND, BETROTHED TO THE KING OF SPAIN—HER AFFLICTION —JEALOUSY OF THE KING, HER HUSBAND.

THE unfortunate lady, Henrietta of England, had left, at her death, two extremely young girls, one of them, indeed, being still in the cradle. The new Madame was seized with good-will for these two orphans to such an extent as to complain to the King. They were brought up with the greatest care; they were, both of them, pretty and charming.

The elder was named Marie Louise. It was this one whom Monsieur destined in his own mind for Monseigneur le Dauphin; and the Princess, accustomed early to this prospect, had insensibly adapted to it her mind and hope. Young, beautiful, agreeable and charming as her mother, she created already the keenest sensation at Court, and the King felt an inclination to cherish her as much as he had loved Madame. But the excessive freedom

which this alliance would not have failed to give his brother, both with his son-in-law and nephew, and with the Ministry, prevented His Majesty from giving way to his penchant for Marie Louise. On the contrary, he consented to her marriage with the King of Spain, and the news of it was accordingly carried to Monsieur le Duc d'Orléans. He and his wife felt much annoyance at it. But after communications of that kind, there was scarcely any course open to be taken than that of acquiescence. Monsieur conveyed the news to his beloved daughter, and, on hearing that she was to be made Queen of Spain, this amiable child uttered loud lamentations.

When she went to Versailles to thank the King, her uncle, her fine eyes were still suffused with tears. The few words which she uttered were mingled with sighing and weeping; and when she saw the indifference of her cousin, who felicitated her like the rest, she almost fainted with grief and regret.

"My dear cousin," said this dull-witted young lord, "I shall count the hours until you go to Spain. You will send me some *touru*, for I am very fond of it?"

The King could not but find this reflection of his son very silly and out of place. But intelligence is neither to be given nor communicated by example. His Majesty had to support to the end this son, legitimate as much as you like, but altogether in degree, and with a person which formed a perpetual contrast with the person of the King. It was my Duc du Maine who should have been in the eminent position of Monseigneur. Nature willed it so. She had proved it sufficiently by lavishing all her favours on him, all her graces; but the laws of convention and usage would not have it. His Majesty has made this same reflection, groaning, more than once.

Marie Louise, having been married by proxy, in the great Chapel of Saint-Germain, where the Cardinal de Bouillon blessed the ring in his quality of Grand-Almoner of France, left for that Spain which her young heart distrusted.

Her beauty and charms rendered her precious to the Monarch, utterly melancholy and devout as he was. He did not delay subjecting her to the wretched, petty, tiresome and absurd etiquette of that Gothic Court. Mademoiselle submitted to all

these nothings, seeing she had been able to submit to separation from France. She condemned herself to the most fastidious observances and the most sore privations, which did not much ameliorate her lot.

A young Castilian lord, almost mad himself, thought fit to find this Queen pretty, and publicly testify his love for her. The jealousy for the religious King flared up like a funeral torch. He conceived a hatred of his wife, reserved and innocent though she was. She died cruelly by poison. And Monseigneur le Dauphin probably cried, after his manner:

"What a great pity! she won't send me the *touru*."

CHAPTER XIV

THE DAUPHINE OF BAVARIA—THE CONFESSOR WITH SPURS —MADAME DE MAINTENON DISPUTES WITH BOSSUET—HE OPPOSES TO HER PAST AGES AND HISTORY—THE MILITARY ABSOLUTION.

EIGHT months after the wedding of Marie Louise we witnessed the arrival of Anne Marie Christine, Princess of Bavaria, daughter of the Elector Ferdinand. The King and Monseigneur went to receive her at Vitry-le-Français, and then escorted her to Châlons, where the Queen was awaiting her.

The Cardinal de Bouillon celebrated the marriage in the cathedral church of this third-class town. The festivities and jubilations there lasted a week.

The King had been very willing to charge me with the arrangement of the baskets of presents destined for the Dauphine; I acquitted myself of

this commission with French taste and a sentiment of what was proper. When the Queen saw all these magnificent gifts placed and spread out in a gallery, she cried out, and said:

"Things were not done so nobly for me; and yet, I can say without vanity, I was of a better house than she."

This remark paints the Queen, Marie Thérèse, better than anything which could be said. Can one wonder, after that, that she should have brought into the world an hereditary prince who so keenly loves *touru*, and asks for it!

Madame de Maintenon and M. Bossuet had gone to receive the Princess of Schelestadt. When she was on her husband's territory, and it was necessary to confess her for the sacrament of matrimony, she was strangely embarrassed. They had not remembered to bring a chaplain of her own nation for her; and she could not confess except in the German tongue.

Madame de Maintenon, who is skilled in all matters of religion, said to the prelate: "I really think, monsieur, that having educated M. le Dauphin, you ought to know a little German—

you who have composed the treatise on universal history."

The Bishop of Meaux excused himself, saying that he knew Greek, Syriac, and even Hebrew; but that, through a fatality, he was ignorant of the German language. A trumpeter was then sent out to ask if there was not in the country a Catholic priest who was a German, or thereabouts. Luckily one was found, and Madame de Maintenon, who is very pedantic, even in the matter of toilet and ornaments, trembled with joy and thanked God for it. But what was her astonishment when they came to bring her the priest! He was in coloured clothes, a silk doublet, flowing perruque, and boots and spurs. The lady-in-waiting rated him severely, and was tempted to send him back. But Bossuet—a far greater casuist than she—decided that in these urgent cases one need hold much less to forms. They were contented with taking away the spurs from this amphibious personage; they pushed him into a confessional—the curtain of which he was careful to draw before himself—and they brought the Bavarian Princess, who, not knowing the

circumstances, confessed the sins of her whole life to this sort of soldier.

Madame de Maintenon always had this *general confession* on her conscience; she scolded Bossuet for it as a sort of sacrilege, and the latter, who was only difficult and particular with simple folk, quoted historical examples in which soldiers, on the eve of battle, had confessed to their general.

"Yes," said the King, on hearing these quotations from the imperturbable man; "that must have been to the Bishop of Puy or the Bishop of Orange, who, in effect, donned the shield and cuirass at the time of the crusades against the Saracens; or perhaps, again, to the Cardinal de la Valette d'Epernon, who commanded our armies under Richelieu successfully."

"No, Sire," replied the Bishop; "to generals who were simply soldiers."

"But," said the King, "were the confessions, then, null?"

"Sire," added the Bishop of Meaux, "circumstances decide everything. Of old, in the time of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and much later still, confessions of Christians were public—made

in a loud voice; sometimes a number together, and always in the open air. Those of soldiers that I have quoted to madame were somewhat of the kind of these confessions of the primitive Church; and to-day, still, at the moment when battle is announced, a military almoner gives the signal for confession. The regiments confess on their knees before the Most High, who hears them; and the almoner, raised aloft on a pile of drums, holds the crucifix in one hand, and with the other gives the general absolution to eighty thousand soldiers at once."

This clear and precise explanation somewhat calmed Madame de Maintenon, and Madame la Dauphine — displeased at what she had done on arriving—in order to be regular, learned to confess in French.

CHAPTER XV

PÈRE DE LA CHAISE—THE JESUITS—THE PAVILION DE BELLEVILLE—THE HANDKERCHIEF.

PÈRE DE LA CHAISE has never done me good or ill; I have no motives for conciliating him, no reason to slander him. I am ignorant if he were the least in the world concerned, at the epoch of the Grand Jubilee, with those ecclesiastical attempts of which Bossuet had constituted himself spokesman. Père de la Chaise has in his favour a great evenness of temper and character; an excellent tone, which comes to him from his birth; a conciliatory philosophy, which renders him always master of his condition and of his *métier*. He is, in a single individual, the happy combination of several men — that is to say, he is by turns, and as it may be needful, a man indulgent or severe in his preaching; a man of abstinence, or a good feeder; a man of the world, or a cœnobite; a man of his breviary, or a courtier. He knows

that the sins of woodcutters and the sins of kings are not of the same family, and that copper and gold are not weighed in the same scales.

He is a Jesuit by his garb, he is much more so than they are by his *savoir-vivre*. His companions love the King because he is the King; he loves him, and pities him because he sees his weakness. He shows for his penitent the circumspection and tenderness of a father, and in the long run he has made of him a spoiled child.

This Père de la Chaise fell suddenly ill, and with symptoms so alarming that the cabals each wished to appropriate this essential post of confessor.

The Jansenists would have been quite willing to lay hold of it. The Jesuits, and principally the *cordons bleus*, did not quit the pillow of the sick man for an instant.

The King had himself informed of his condition every half-hour. There was a bulletin, as there is for potentates. One evening when the doctors were grave on his account, I saw anxiety and affliction painted on the visage of His Majesty.

"Where shall I find his like?" said he to me.

"Where shall I find such knowledge, such indulgence, such kindness? The Père de la Chaise knew the bottom of my heart; he knew, as an intelligent man, how to reconcile religion with nature; and when duty brings me to the foot of his tribunal, as a humble Christian, he never forgets that royalty cannot be long on its knees, and he accompanies with attentions and with deference the religious commands which he is bound to impose on me."

"I hope that God will preserve him to you," I replied to His Majesty; "but let us suppose the case in which this useful and precious man should see his career come to an end; will you grant still this mark of confidence and favour to the Jesuits? All the French being your subjects, would it not be fitting to grant this distinction sometimes to the one and sometimes to the other? You would, perhaps, extinguish by this that hate or animosity by which the Jesuits see themselves assailed, which your preference draws upon them."

"I do not love the Jesuits with that affection that you seem to suggest," replied the Monarch. "I look upon them as men of instruction, as a

learned and well-governed corporation; but as for their attachment for me, I know how to estimate it. This kind of people, strangers to the soft emotions of Nature, have no affection or love for anything. Before the triumph of the King, my grandfather, they intrigued and exerted themselves to bring about his fall; he opened the gates of Paris, and the Jesuits, like the Capuchins, at once recognised him and bowed down before him. King Henri, who knew what men are, pretended to forget the past; he pronounced himself decidedly in favour of the Jesuits because this body of teachers, numerous, rich, and of good credit, had just pronounced itself in favour of him.

"It was, then, a reconciliation between power and power, and the politics of my grandfather were to survive him and become mine, since the same elements exist and I am encamped on the same ground. If God takes away from me my poor Père de la Chaise, I shall feel this misfortune deeply, because I shall lose in him, not a Jesuit, not a priest, but a good companion, a trusty and proved friend. If I lose him, I shall assuredly be inconsolable for him; but it will be very necessary

for me to take his successor from the Grand Monastery of the Rue Saint-Antoine. This community knows me by heart, and I do not like innovations."

The successor of the Père de la Chaise was already settled with the Jesuit fathers; but this man of the vanguard was spared marching and meeting danger. The Court was not condemned to see and salute a new face; the old Confessor recovered his health. His Majesty experienced a veritable joy at it, a joy as real as if the Prince of Orange had died.

Wishing to prove to the good convalescent how dear his preservation was to him, the King released him from his function for the rest of the year, and begged him to watch over his health, the most important of his duties and his possessions.

Having learnt that they had neither terraces nor gardens at the grand monastery of the Rue de Saint-Antoine, His Majesty made a present to his Confessor of a very agreeable house in the district of Belleville, and caused to be transported thither all kinds of orange trees, rare shrubs and flowers from Versailles. These tasteful attentions, these filial cares, diverted the capital somewhat;

but Paris is a rich soil, where the strangest things are easily received and naturalised without an effort.

The Père de la Chaise had his chariot with his arms on it, and his family livery; and as the income from his benefices remained to him, joined to his office of Confessor, he continued to have every day a numerous court of young abbés, priests well on in years, barons, comtesses, marquises, magistrates and colonels, who came to Belleville in anxiety about his health, to congratulate themselves upon his convalescence, to ask of him, with submission and reverence, a bishopric, an archbishopric, a cardinal's hat, an important priory, a canonry or an abbey.

Having myself to place the three daughters of one of my relatives, I went to see the noble Confessor at his pavilion of Belleville. He received me with the most marked distinction, and was lavish in acts of gratitude for all the benefits of the King.

As he crossed his *salon*, in order to accompany me and escort me out, he let his white handkerchief fall; three bishops at once flung themselves

upon it, and there was a struggle as to who should pick it up to give it back to him.

I related to the King what I had seen. He said to me: "These prelates honour my Confessor, looking upon him as a second me." In fact, the sins of the King could only throw his Confessor into relief and add to his merit.

CHAPTER XVI

MADEMOISELLE DE FONTANGES—THE PAVILIONS OF THE GARDEN OF FLORA—RAPID TRIUMPH OF THE FAVOURITE —HER RETREAT TO VAL-DE-GRÂCE—HER DEATH.

MADAME DE MAINTENON was already forty-four years old, and only appeared to be thirty. This freshness, that she owed either to painstaking care or to her happy and quite peculiar constitution, gave her that air of youth which fascinated the eyes of the courtiers and those of the Monarch himself. I wished one day to annoy her by bringing the conversation on this subject, which could not be diverting to her. I began by putting the question generally, and I then named several of our superannuated beauties who still fluttered in the smiling gardens of Flora without having the youth of butterflies.

"There are butterflies of every age and colour in the gardens of Flora," said she, catching the

ball on the rebound. "There are presumptuous ones, whom the first breath of the zephyr despoils of their plumage and discolours; others, more reserved and less frivolous, keep their glamour and prestige for a much longer time. For the rest, the latter seem to me to rejoice without being vain in their advantages. And at bottom, what should any insect gain by being proud?"

"Very little," I answered her, "since being dressed as a butterfly does not prevent one from being an insect, and the best sustained preservation lasts at the most till the day after to-morrow."

The King entered. I started speaking of a *young person*, extremely beautiful, who had just appeared at Court, and would eclipse, in my opinion, all who had shone there before her.

"What do you call her?" asked His Majesty. "To what family does she belong?"

"She comes from the provinces," I continued, "just like silk, silver and gold. Her parents desire to place her among the maids-of-honour of the Queen. Her name is Fontanges, and God has never made anything so beautiful."

As I said these words I watched the face of

the Marquise. She listened to this portrayal with attention, but without appearing moved by it, such is her power of suppressing her natural feeling. The King only added these words:

"*This young person needs be quite extraordinary, since Madame de Montespan praises her, and praises her with so much vivacity. However, we shall see.*"

Two days afterwards Mademoiselle de Fontanges was seen in the *salon* of the grand table. The King, in spite of his composure, had looks and attentions for no one else.

This excessive preoccupation struck the Queen, who, marking the blandishments of the young coquette and the King's response, guessed the whole future of this encounter; and in her heart was almost glad at it, seeing that my turn had come.

Mademoiselle de Fontanges, given to the King by her shameless family, feigned love and passion for the Monarch, as though he had returned by enchantment to his twentieth year.

As for him, he too appeared to us to forget all dates. I know that he was only now forty-one years old, and having been the finest man in the

world, he could not but preserve agreeable vestiges of a once striking beauty. But his young conquest had hardly entered on her eighteenth year, and this difference could not fail to be plain to the most inattentive, or most indulgent eyes.

The King, with a sort of anticipatory resignation, had for six or seven years greatly simplified his appearance. We had seen him, little by little, reform that Spanish and chivalric costume with which he once embellished his first loves. The flowing plumes no longer floated over his forehead, which had become pensive and quite serious. The diagonal scarf was suppressed, and the long boots, with gold and silver embroidery, were no longer seen. To please his new divinity, the Monarch suddenly enough rejuvenated his attire. The most elegant stuffs became the substance of his garments; feathers reappeared. He joined to them emeralds and diamonds.

Allegorical comedies, concerts on the waters recommenced. Triumphant horse-races set the whole Court abob and in movement. There was a fresh carousal; there was all that resembles the enthusiasms of youthful affection, and the deliriums

of youth. The youth alone was not there, at least in proportion, assortment, and similarity.

All that I was soliciting for twelve years, Mademoiselle de Fontanges had only to desire for a week. She was created Duchesse at her *début;* and the lozenge of her escutcheon was of a sudden adorned with a ducal coronet, and a peer's mantle.

I did not deign to pay attention to this outrage; at least, I made a formal resolution never to say a single word on it.

The King came no less from time to time, to pay me a visit, and to talk to me, as of old, of operas and his hunting. I endured his conversation with a philosophical phlegm. He scarcely suspected the change in me.

At the chase one day, his nymph, whom nothing could stop, had her knot of riband caught and held by a branch; the royal lover compelled the branch to restore the knot, and went and offered it to his Amazon. Singular and sparkling, although lacking in intelligence, she carried herself this knot of riband to the top of her hair, and fixed it there with a long pin.

Fortune willed it that this *coiffure,* without

order or arrangement, suited her face, and suited it greatly. The King was the first to congratulate her on it; all the courtiers applauded it, and this *coiffure* of the chase became the fashion of the day.

All the ladies, and the Queen herself, found themselves obliged to adopt it. Madame de Maintenon submitted herself to it, like the others. I alone refused to sacrifice to the idol, and my knee, being once more painful, would not bend before Baal.

With the exception of the general duties of the sovereignty, the Prince appeared to have forgotten everything for his flame. The Père de La Chaise, who had returned to his post, regarded this fresh incident with his philosophic calm, and congratulated himself on seeing the Monarch healed of at least one of his passions.

I had always taken the greatest care to respect the Queen; and since my star condemned me to stand in her shoes, I did not spare myself the general attentions which two well-born people owe one another, and which, at least, prove a lofty education.

The Duchesse de Fontanges, doubtless, believed

herself Queen, because she had the public homage and the King. This imprudent and conceited school-girl had the face to pass before her Sovereign without stopping and without troubling to curtsey.

The Infanta reddened with disapproval, and persuaded herself, by way of consolation, that Fontanges had lost her senses or was on the road to madness.

Beautiful and brilliant as the flowers, the Duchesse, like them, passed swiftly away. Her pregnancy, by reason of toilsome rides, hunting parties, and other agitations, became complicated. From the eighth month she fell into a fever, into exhaustion and languor. The terror that took possession of her imagination caused her to desire a sojourn in a convent as a refuge of health, where God would see her nearer and, perhaps, come to her aid.

She had herself transported during the night to the House of the Ladies of Val-de-Grâce, and desired that they should place in her chamber several relics from their altars.

Her confinement was not less laboured and

sinister. When she saw that all the assistance of art could not stop the bleeding, with which her deep bed was flooded, she caused the King to be summoned, embraced him tenderly, in the midst of sobs and tears, and died in the night, pronouncing the name of God and the name of the King, the objects of her love and of fears.

CHAPTER XVII

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ — MADAME DE GRIGNAN — MADAME DE MONTESPAN AT THE CARMELITES—MADAME DE LA VALLIÈRE — THESE TWO GREAT RUINS CONSOLE ONE ANOTHER — AN ANGEL OF SWEETNESS, GOODNESS AND KINDNESS.

FIFTEEN or twenty days before the death of Mademoiselle de Fontanges, my sister and I were taking a walk in the new woods of Versailles. We met the Marquise de Sévigné near the canal; she was showing these marvellous constructions to her daughter, the Comtesse de Grignan. They greeted us with their charming amiability, and, after having spoken of several indifferent matters, the Marquise said to me: "We saw, five or six days ago, a person, madam, of whom you were formerly very fond, and who charged us to recall her to the memory of her friends. You are still of their number, I like to think so, and our commission holds good where you are concerned, if you will allow it."

Then she mentioned to me that poor Duchesse de la Vallière, to whom I was once compelled by my unhappy star to give umbrage, and whom, in my fatal thoughtlessness, I had afflicted without desiring it.

Tears came into my eyes; Madame de Sévigné saw them, and expressed her regret at having caused me pain. Madame de Thianges and I asked her if my old friend was much changed. She and Madame de Grignan assured us that she was fresh, in good health, and that her face appeared more beautiful. On the next day I wished absolutely to see her, and drove to the Carmelites.

On seeing my pretty cripple, who hobbled among us with so great a charm, I uttered a cry, which for a moment troubled her. She sank down to salute the crucifix, as custom demands, and, after her short prayer, she came to me. "I did not mention your name to Mesdames de Sévigné," said she; "but, however, I am obliged to them, since they have been able to procure me the pleasure of seeing you once more."

"The general opinion of the Court, and in the world, my dear Duchesse," answered I, "is

that I brought about your disgrace myself; and the public, that loved you, has not ceased to reproach me with your misfortune."

"The public is very kind still to occupy itself with me," she answered; "but it is wrong in that, as in so many other matters. My retirement from the world is not a misfortune, and I never suspected that the soul could find such peace and satisfaction in these silent solitudes.

"The first days were painful to me, I admit it, owing to the inexpressible difference which struck me between what I found here and what I had left elsewhere. But just as the eye accustoms itself, little by little, to the feeble glimmer of a vault, in the same way my body has accustomed itself to the roughness of my new existence, and my heart to all its great privations.

"If life had not to finish, in fulfilment of a solemn, universal and inevitable decree, the constraint that I have put upon myself might at length become oppressive, and my yoke prove somewhat heavy. But all that will finish soon, for all undertakings come to an end. I left you

young, beautiful, adored, and triumphant in the land of enchantments. But six years have passed, and they assure me that your own afflictions have come, and that you yourself have been forced to drink the bitter cup of deprivation."

At these words, pronounced in a melancholy and celestial voice, I felt as though my heart were broken, and burst into tears.

"I pity you, Athénais," she resumed; "is, then, what I have been told lightly, and almost in haste, only too certain for you? How is it you did not expect it? How could you believe *him* constant and immutable, after what happened to me?

"To-day, I make no secret to you of it, and I say it with the peaceful indifference which God has generously granted me, after such dolorous tribulations. I make no secret of it to you, Athénais; a thousand times you plunged the sword and dagger into my heart, when, profiting by my confidence in you, by my sense of entire security, you permitted your own inclination to substitute itself for mine, and a young man seething with desires to be attracted by your charms. These

unlimited sufferings exhausted, I must believe, all the sensibility of my soul. And when this corrosive flame had completely devoured my grief, a new existence grew up in me; I no longer saw in the father of my children other than a young Prince, accustomed to see his dominating will fulfilled in everything. Knowing how little in this matter he is master of himself, he who knows so well how to be master of himself in everything to do with his numerous inferiors, I deplored the facility he enjoys from his attractions, from his wealth, from his power to dazzle the hearts which he desires to move and subdue.

"Recognise these truths, my dear Marquise," she added, "and gain, for it is time, a just idea of your position. After the unhappiness I felt at being loved no longer, I should have quitted the Court that very instant, if I had been permitted to bring up and tend my poor children. They were too young to abandon! I stayed still in the midst of you, as the swallow hovers and flits among the smoke of the fire, in order to watch over and save her little ones. Do not wait till disdain, or authority, mingles in the matter. Do

not come to the sad necessity of resisting a Monarch, and of detesting to the point of scandal that which you have so publicly loved; pity him, but depart. This kind of intimacy once broken, cannot be renewed. However skilfully it may be patched up, the rent always reappears."

"My good Louise," I replied to the amiable Carmelite, "your wise counsels touch me, persuade me, and are nothing but the truth. But in listening to you I feel overwhelmed; and that strength which you knew how to gain, and show to the world, your former companion will never possess.

"I see with astonished eyes the supernatural calm which reigns in your countenance; your health seems to me a prodigy, your beauty was never so ravishing; but this barbarous garb pierces me to the heart.

"The King does not yet hate me; he shows me even a remnant of respect, with which he would colour his indifference. Permit me to ask from him for you an abbey like that of Fontevrault, where the felicities of sanctuary and of the world are all in the power of my sister. He will ask nothing better than to take you out, be assured."

"Speak to him of me," answered Louise; "I do not oppose that; but leave me until the end the *rôle* of obedience and humility that his fault and mine impose on me. Why should he wish that I should command others, I who did not know how to command myself at an epoch when my innocence was so dear to me, and when I knew that, in losing that, one is lost?"

As she said these words two nuns came to announce Her Serene Highness, that is to say her daughter, the Princess de Conti. I prayed Madame de la Vallière to keep between ourselves the communications that had just taken place in the intimacy of confidence. She promised me, with her usual candour. I made a profound reverence to the daughter, embraced the mother weeping, and regained my carriage, which the Princess must have remarked on entering.

CHAPTER XVIII

REFLECTIONS—THE FUTURE—THE REFUGE OF FORESIGHT —COMMUNITY OF SAINT-JOSEPH — WICKED SAYING OF BOSSUET.

I WEPT much during the journey; and to save the spectacle of my grief from the passers-by, I was at the pains to lower the curtains. I passed over in my mind all that the Duchesse had said to me. It was very easy for me to understand that the Monarch's heart had escaped me, and that, owing to his character, all resistance, all contradiction would be vain. The figure, as it had been supernumerary and *on sufferance*, which the Duchesse had made in the midst of the Court when she ceased to be loved, returned to my memory completely, and I felt I had not the courage to drink a similar cup of humiliation.

I reminded myself of what the Prince had told me several times in those days when his keen

affection for me led him to wish for my happiness, even in the future—even after his death, if I were destined to survive him.

"You ought," he said to me, at those moments, "you ought to choose and assure yourself beforehand of an honourable retreat; for it is rarely that a king accords his respect or his goodwill to the beloved confidante of his predecessor."

Not wishing to ask a refuge of anyone, but, on the contrary, being greatly set upon ruling in my own house, I resolved to build myself, not a formal convent like Val-de-Grâce or Fontevrault, but a pretty little community, whose nuns, few in number, would owe me their entire existence, which would necessarily attach them to all my interests. I held to this idea. I charged my intendant to seek for me a site spacious enough for my enterprise; and when he had found it, had showed it to me, and had satisfied me with it, I had what rambling buildings there were pulled down, and began, with a sort of joy, the excavations and foundations.

The first blow of the hammer was struck, by some inconceivable fortuity, at the moment when

the Duchesse de Fontanges expired. Her death did not weaken my resolutions nor slacken my ardour. I got away sufficiently frequent to cast an eye over the work, and ordered my architect to second my impatience and spur on the numerous workmen.

The rumour was current in Paris that the example of "Sœur Louise" had touched me, and that I was going to take the veil in my convent. I took no notice of this fickle public, and persisted wisely in my plan.

The unexpected and almost sudden decease of Mademoiselle de Fontanges had singularly moved the King. Extraordinary and almost incredible to relate, he was for a whole week absent from the Council. His eyes had shed so many tears that they were swollen and unrecognisable. He shunned the occasions when there was an assembly, buried himself in his private apartments or in his groves, and resembled, in every trait, Orpheus weeping for his fair Eurydice, and refusing to be consoled.

I should be false to others and to myself if I were to say that his extreme grief excited my compassion; but I should equally belie the truth if I gave it to be understood that his "widow-

hood" gave me pleasure, and that I congratulated myself on his sorrow and bitterness.

He came to see me when he found himself presentable, and, for the first few days, I abstained from all reprisal and any allusion. The innumerable labours of his State soon threw him, in spite of himself, into those manifold distractions which, in their nature, despise or absorb the sensibilities of the soul. He resumed, little by little, his accustomed serenity, and, at the end of the month, appeared to have got over it.

"What," he asked me, "are those buildings with which you are busy in Paris, opposite the Ladies of Belle-Chasse? I hear of a convent; is it your intention to retire?"

"It is a 'refuge of foresight,'" I answered him. "Who can count upon the morrow? And after what has befallen Mademoiselle de Fontanges, we must consider ourselves as persons already numbered, who wait only for the call."

He sighed, and soon spoke of something else.

I reminded myself that, to speak correctly, I had in Paris no habitation worthy of my children and of my quality. That little hôtel in the Rue

Saint-André-des-Arcs[1] could count for no more than a little box. I sought amongst my papers for the design of a magnificent hôtel which I had obtained from the famous Blondel. I found it without difficulty, with full elevations and sections. The artist had adroitly imitated in it the beautiful architecture of the Louvre; this fair palace would suit me in every respect.

My architect, at a cursory glance, judged that the construction and completion of this edifice would easily cost as much as eighteen hundred thousand livres.[2] This expense being no more than I could afford, I commissioned him to choose me a spacious site for the buildings and gardens over by Roule and La Pépinière.

Not caring to superintend several undertakings at once, I desired, before everything, that my house in the Faubourg Saint-Germain should be completed; and when the buildings and the chapel were in a condition to receive the little colony, I dedicated my "refuge of foresight" to Saint-Joseph, the respectful spouse of the Holy Virgin and foster-

1 It still exists, with the number 61.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

2 More than seven millions to day.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

father of the Child Jesus. This agreeable mansion lacked a large garden. I felt a sensible regret for this, especially for the sake of my inmates; but there was a little open space furnished with vines and fruit-walls, and one of the largest courtyards in the whole of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

Having always loved society, I had multiplied in the two principal blocks of the sleeping-rooms and the entrance-hall complete apartments for the lady inmates. And a proof that I was neither detested by the world nor unconsidered is that all these apartments were sought after and occupied as soon as the windows were put in and the painting done. My own apartment was simple, but of a majestic dignity. It communicated with the chapel, where my tribune, closed with a handsome window, was in face of the altar.

I decided, once for all, that the Superior should be my nomination whilst God should leave me in this world, but that this right should not pass on to my heirs. The bell of honour rang for twenty minutes every time I paid a visit to these ladies; and I only had incense at High Mass, and at the Magnificat, in my quality of foundress.

I went from time to time to make retreats, or, to be more accurate, vacations, in my House of Saint-Joseph. M. Bossuet solicited the favour of being allowed to preach there on the day of the solemn consecration. I begged him to preserve himself for my funeral oration. He answered cruelly that there was nothing he could refuse me.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COURT TRAVELS IN PICARDY AND FLANDERS—THE BOUDOIR NAVY—MADAME DE MONTESPAN IS NOT INVITED—THE KING RELATES TO HER THE DELIGHTS OF THE JOURNEY—REFLECTIONS OF THE MARQUISE.

THE King, consoled as he was for the death of the Duchesse de Fontanges, did not, on that account, return to that sweet and agreeable intimacy which had united us for the space of eleven or twelve years. He approached me as one comes to see a person of one's acquaintance, and it was more than obvious that his only bond with me was his children.

Being a man who loved pomp and show, he resolved upon a journey in Flanders—a journey destined to furnish him, as well as his Court, with numerous and agreeable distractions, and to give fresh alarm to his neighbours.

Those "Chambers of Reunion," as they were called, established at Metz and at Brisach, com-

peted with each other in despoiling roundly a host of great proprietors, under the pretext that their possessions had formerly belonged to Alsace, and that this Alsace had been ceded to us by the last treaties. The Prince Palatine of the Rhine saw himself stripped, on this occasion, of the greater part of the land which he had inherited from his ancestors, and when he would present a memoir on this subject to the ministers, M. de Croissy-Colbert answered politely that he was in despair at being unable to decide the matter himself; but that the Chambers of Metz and Brisach having been instituted to take cognizance of it, it was before these solemn tribunals that he must proceed.

The Palatine lost, amongst other things, the entire county of Veldentz, which was joined to the church of the Chapter of Verdun.

The King, followed by the Queen and all his Court—by M. le Dauphin, Madame la Dauphine and the legitimate Princes, whom their households accompanied as well—set out for Flanders in the month of July. Madame de Maintenon, as lady-in-waiting, went on this journey; and of me,

superintendent of the Queen's council, they did not even speak.

The first town at which this considerable Court stopped was at Boulogne, in Picardy, the fortifications of which were being repaired. On the next day the King went on horseback to visit the port of Ambleteuse; thence he set out for Calais, following the line of the coast, while the ladies took the same course more rapidly. He inspected the harbours and diverted himself by taking a sail in a wherry. He then betook himself to Dunkirk, where the Marquis de Seignelay—son of Colbert—had made ready a very fine man-of-war with which to regale Their Majesties. The Chevalier de Léry, who commanded her, showed them all the handling of it, which was for those ladies, and for the Court, a spectacle as pleasant as it was novel. The whole crew were very smart, and the vessel magnificently equipped. There was a sham fight, and then the vessel was boarded. The King took as much pleasure in this sight as if Fontanges had been the heroine of the fête, and our ladies, to please him, made their hands sore in applauding. This naval fight

terminated in a great feast, which left nothing to be desired in the matter of sumptuousness and delicacy.

On the following day, there was a more formal fight between two frigates, which had also been prepared for this amusement.

The King was in a galley as spectator; the Queen was in another. The Chevalier de Léry took the helm of that of the King; the Capitaine de Selingue steered that of the Queen. The sea was calm, and there was just enough wind to set the two frigates in motion. They cannonaded one another briskly for an hour, getting the weather gauge in turn; after this, the combat came to an end, and they returned to the town to the sound of instruments and the noise of cannon.

The King gave large bounties to the crew, as a token of his satisfaction.

The Prince was on board his first vessel, when the Earl of Oxford, and the Colonel, afterwards the Duke of Marlborough, despatched by the King of England, came to pay him a visit of compliment on behalf of that Sovereign.

The Duke of Villa-Hermosa, Spanish Governor

of the Low Countries, paid him the same compliment in the name of his master.

Both parties were given audience on this magnificent vessel, where M. de Seignelay had raised a sort of throne of immense height.

(All this time Mademoiselle de Fontanges lay in her coffin, *recovering* from her confinement.)

From Dunkirk the Court moved to Ypres, visiting all the places on the way, and arrived at Lille in Flanders on the 1st of August. From Lille, where the diversions lasted five or six days, they moved to Valenciennes, thence to Condé, meeting everywhere with the same honours, the same tokens of gladness. They returned to Sedan by Le Quénoy, Bouchain, Cambrai; and the end of the month of August found the Court once more at Versailles.

I profited by this absence to go and breathe a little at my château of Petit-Bourg, where I was accompanied by Mademoiselle de Blois, and the young Comte de Toulouse; after which I betook myself to the mineral waters of Bourbonne, for which I have a predilection.

On my return, the King related to me all these

frivolous diversions of frigates and vessels that I have just mentioned; but with as much fire as if he had been but eighteen years old, and with the same cordiality as if I might have taken part in amusements from which he had excluded me.

How is it that a clever man can forget the proprieties to such a degree, and expose himself to the secret judgments which must be formed of him, in spite of himself and however reluctantly?

CHAPTER XX

THE DUCHESSE D'ORLÉANS—THE DUCHESSE DE RICHELIEU—AN EPIGRAM OF MADAME DE MAINTENON—AN EPIGRAM OF THE KING TO HIS BROTHER.

MADAME LA DAUPHINE brought into the world a son, christened Louis at the font, to whom the King a few moments afterwards gave the title of the Duke of Burgundy. We had become accustomed, little by little, to the face of this Dauphine, who (thanks to the counsels and instruction of her lady-in-waiting) adopted French manners promptly enough, succeeded in doing her hair in a satisfactory manner, and in making an appearance which met with general approval. Madame de Maintenon, for all her politeness and forethought, never succeeded in pleasing her; and these two women, obliged to see each other often from their relative positions, suffered martyrdom when they met.

The King, who had noticed it, began by resenting it from his daughter-in-law. The latter, proud

and haughty, like all these petty German Royalties, thought herself too great a lady to give way.

Madame de Maintenon had, near the person of the young Bavarian, two intermediaries of importance, who did not sing her praises from morn till eve. The one was that Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, whom I have already described to the life, who, furious at her personal monstrousness, could not as a rule forgive pretty women. The other was the Duchesse de Richelieu, maid-of-honour to the Princess of Bavaria, once the protector of Madame Scarron, and now her antagonist, probably out of jealousy.

These two acid tongues had taken possession of the Dauphine — a character naturally prone to jealousy; and they permitted themselves against the lady-in-waiting all the mockery and all the depreciation that one can permit oneself against the absent.

Insinuations and abuse produced their effect so thoroughly, that Madame de Maintenon grew disgusted with the duties of her office, and with the consent of the Monarch she no longer appeared at the house of his daughter-in-law, except on state

and gala occasions. Madame de Richelieu related to me one day the annoyance and mortification of the new Marquise.

"Madame d'Orléans[1] came in one day," said she to me, "to Madame la Dauphine, where Madame de Maintenon was. The Princess of the Palais Royal, who does not put herself about, as everyone knows, only greeted the Dauphine and me. She spoke of her health, which is neither good nor bad, and pretended that her gowns were growing too large for her, in proof that she was going thin. '*I do not know*,' she added brusquely, '*what Madame Scarron does; she is always the same.*'

"The lady-in-waiting answered on the spot: 'Madam, no one finds you changed either, *and it is always the same thing.*'

"The half-polite, half-bantering tone of Madame de Maintenon nonplussed the Palatine for the moment; she wished to demand an explanation from the lady-in-waiting. She took up her muff, without making a curtsey, and retired very swiftly."

---

1 Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans was a cousin of the Dauphine of Bavaria.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

"I am scarcely fond of Madame de Maintenon," said I to Madame de Richelieu, "but I like her answer exceedingly. Madame is one of those great hermaphrodite bodies which the two sexes recognise and repulse at the same time. She is an aggressive personage, whom her hideous face makes one associate naturally with mastiffs; she is surly, like them, and, like them, she exposes herself to the blows of a stick. It makes very little difference to me if she hears from you the portrait I have just made of her; you can tell her, and I shall certainly not give you the lie."

Monsieur, having come some days afterwards to the King, complained of Madame de Maintenon, who, he said, had given offence to his wife.

"You have just made a great mistake," said the King; "you who pride yourself on speaking your tongue so well, and I am going to put you right. This is how you ought rather to have expressed yourself: '*I complain of Madame de Maintenon, who, by ambiguous words, has given offence, or wished to give offence, to my husband.*'"

Monsieur made up his mind to laugh, and said no more of it.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MARQUIS DE LAUZUN AT LIBERTY—HIS CONDUCT TO HIS WIFE—RECOVERY OF MADEMOISELLE.

MADEMOISELLE, having by means of her donations to the Duc du Maine obtained, at first, the release, and subsequently the entire liberty of Lauzun, wished to go to meet him and to receive him in a superb carriage with six horses. The King had her informed secretly that she should manage matters with more moderation; and the King only spoke so because he was better informed than anyone of the ungrateful aversion of Lauzun to mademoiselle. No one wished to open her eyes, for she had refused to see; time itself had to instruct her, and time, which wears wings, arrived at that result quickly enough.

Monsieur de Lauzun was, beyond gainsaying, a man of feeling and of courage, but he nourished in his heart a limitless ambition, and his head,

subject to whims and caprices, would not suffer him to follow methodically a fixed plan of conduct. The King had just pardoned him as a favour to his cousin; but, knowing him well, he was not at all fond of him. They had disposed of his office of Captain of the Guards and of the other command of the *Becs de Corbins*. It was decided that Lauzun should not return to his employment; but His Majesty charged Monsieur Colbert to make good to him the amount and to add to it the arrears.

These different sums, added together, formed a capital of nine hundred and eighty thousand francs,[1] which was paid at once in notes on the treasury, which were equal in value to ready cash. On news of this, he broke into the most violent rage possible; he was tempted to throw these notes into the fire. It was his offices which he wanted, and not these sums, with which he could do nothing.

The King received him with an easy, kind air; he, always a flatterer with his lips, cast himself ten times on his knees before the Prince, and

1 Nearly four millions to-day.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

gained nothing by all these demonstrations. He went to rejoin mademoiselle on the following day at Choisy, and dared to scold her for having constructed and even bought this pretty pleasure-house.

"This must have cost treasures," said he. "Had you not parks and châteaus enough? It would have been better to keep all these sums and give them to me now."

After this exordium, he set himself to criticise the coiffure of the Queen, on account of the *coloured knots* that he had remarked in it.

"But you mean, then, to satirise me personally," said the Princess to him, "since you see my hair dressed in the same fashion, and I am older than my cousin?

"What became of you on leaving the King?" she asked him. "I waited for you till two hours after midnight."

"I went," said he, "to visit M. de Louvois, who is not my friend, and who requires humouring; then to visit M. Colbert, who favours me."

"You ought to have seen Madame de Maintenon—I gave you that advice before leaving you,"

she said; "it is to her, above all, that you owe your liberty."

"But your Madame de Maintenon," he resumed, "is she, too, one of the powers? Ah, my God! what a new geography since I left these regions ten years ago."

To avoid *tête-à-tête*, M. de Lauzun was always in a surly humour; he put his left arm into a sling; he never ceased talking of his rheumatism and his pains.

Mademoiselle learned, now from one person, now from another, that he was dining to-day with one fair lady, to-morrow with another, and the next day with a third. She finally understood that she was despised and tricked; she showed one last generosity (out of pride) towards her former friend—solicited for him the title of Duke, and begged him, for the future, to arrange his life to please himself, *and to let her alone*.

The Marquis de Lauzun took her at her word, and never forgave her for the cession of the principalities of Dombes and Eu to M. le Duc du Maine; he wanted them for himself.

CHAPTER XXII

PROGRESS OF MADAME DE MAINTENON—THE ANONYMOUS LETTER.

1677 SINCE the birth of Mademoiselle de Blois, and the death of Mademoiselle de Fontanges, the King hardly ever saw me except a few minutes ceremoniously—a few minutes before and after supper. He showed himself always assiduous with Madame de Maintenon, who, by her animated and unflagging talk, had the very profitable secret of keeping him amused. Although equally clever, I venture to flatter myself, in the art of manipulating speech, I could not stoop to such condescensions. You cannot easily divert—when you have a heart and are sincere—a man who deserts you, who does not even take the trouble to acknowledge it and excuse himself.

The Marquise sailed, then, on the open sea, with all sail set; whilst my little barque did little

more than tack about near the shore. One day I received the following letter; it was in a pleasant and careful handwriting, and orthography was observed with complete regularity, which suggested that a man had been its writer, or its editor:—

"The person who writes these lines, Madame la Marquise, sees you but rarely, but is none the less attached to you. The advice which he is going to give you in writing he would have made it a duty to come and give you himself; he has been deterred by the fear either of appearing to you indiscreet, or of finding you too deeply engrossed with occupations, or with visitors, as is so often the case in your apartments.

"These visitors, this former affluence of greedy and interested hearts, you will soon see revealed and diminishing; probably your eyes, which are so alert, have already remarked this diminution. The Monarch no longer loves you; coolness and inconstancy are maladies of the human heart. In the midst of the most splendid health, our King has for some time past experienced this malady.

"In your place, I should not wait to see myself repudiated. By whatever outward respect such an injunction be accompanied, the bottom of the cup is always the same, and the honey at the edge is but a weak palliative. Being no ordinary woman by birth, do not terminate like an ordinary actress your splendid and magnificent rôle on this great stage. Know how

to leave before the audience is weary, while they can say, when they miss you from the scene: '*She was still fine in her rôle. It is a pity!*'

"Since a new taste, or new caprice, of the Monarch has led his affections away, know how to endure a fantasy which you have not the power to remove. Despatch yourself with a good grace; and let the world believe that sober reflections have come to you, and that you return, of your own free will, into the paths of independence, of true glory, and of honour.

"Your position of superintendent with the Queen has been from the very first almost a sinecure. Give up to Madame de Maintenon, or to anyone else, a dignity which is of no use to you, for which you will be paid now its full value; which, later, is likely to cause you a sensible disappointment; for that is always sold at a loss which must be sold at a given moment.

"Nature, so prodigal to you, Madame la Marquise, has not yet deflowered, nor recalled in the least degree, those graces and attractions which were lavished on you. Retire with the honours of war.

"Annoyance, vexation, irritation, do not make your veins flow with milk and honey; you would lose upon the field of battle all those treasures which it is in your power to save.

"Adieu, Madam.

"This communication, though anonymous, is none the less benevolent. I desire your peace and your happiness."

CHAPTER XXIII

MADAME DE MAINTENON AT LOGGERHEADS WITH MADAME DE THIANGES—THE MINT OF THE D'AUBIGNÉ FAMILY—CRÊME DE NÉGRESSE, THE ELIXIR OF LONG LIFE—NINON'S SECRET FOR BEAUTY — THE KING WOULD REMAIN YOUNG OR BECOME SO—GOODWILL OF MADAME DE MAINTENON.

THIS letter was not, in my eyes, a masterpiece, but neither was it from a vulgar hand. For a moment I suspected Madame de Maintenon. She was named in it, it is true, as though by the way, but her interest in it was easy to discover, since the writer dared to try to induce me to sell her, *to give up to her*, my superintendence. I communicated my suspicions to the Marquise de Thianges. She said to me: "We must see her—her face expresses her emotions very clearly; she is not good at lying; we shall easily extract her secret and make her blush for her stratagem."

Ibrahim, faithful to his old friendship for

me, had recently sent me stuffs of Asia and essences of the seraglio, under the pretence of politeness and as a remembrance. I wrote two lines to the Marquise, engaging her to come and sacrifice half-an-hour to me to admire with me these curiosities. Suspecting nothing, she came to my apartments, when she accepted some perfumes and found all these stuffs divine. My sister, Madame de Thianges, said to her: "Madam, I do not wish to be the last to congratulate you on that boundless confidence and friendship that our Queen accords to you. Assuredly, no one deserves more than you this feeling of preference; it appears that the Princess is developing, and that, at last, she is taking a liking for choice conversation and for wit."

"Madam," answered the lady-in-waiting, "Her Majesty *does not prefer me to anyone here.* You are badly informed. She has the goodness to accord to me a little confidence; and since she finds in me some facility in the Spanish tongue, of which she wishes to remain the idolater all her life, she loves to speak that tongue with me, catching me up when I go wrong either in the pronunciation or the grammar, as she desires to be corrected

herself when she commits some offence against our French."

"You were born," added Madame de Thianges, "to work at the education of Kings. It is true that few governesses or tutors are as amiable. There is a sound in your voice which goes straight to the heart; and what others teach rudely or monotonously, you teach musically and almost singing. Since the Queen loves your French and your Spanish, everything has been said; you are indispensable to her. Things being so, I dare to propose to you, madam, a third occupation, which will suit you better than anything else in the world, and which will complete the happiness of Her Majesty.

"Here is Madame de Montespan, who is growing disgusted with grandeur, after having recognised its emptiness, who is enthusiastically desiring to go and enjoy her House of Saint-Joseph, and wishes to get rid of her superintendence forthwith, at any cost."

"What!" said Madame de Maintenon. Then to me: "You wish to sell your office without having first assured yourself whether it be pleasing

to the King? It appears to me that you are not acting on this occasion with the caution with which you are generally credited."

"What need has she of so many preliminary cautions," added the Marquise, "if it is to you that she desires to sell it? Her choice guarantees the consent of the Princess; your name will make everything easy."

"I reason quite otherwise, Madame la Marquise," replied the former governess of the Princes; "the Queen may have her ideas. It is right and fitting to find out first her intention and wishes."

"Madam, madam," said my sister, then, "everything has been sufficiently considered, and even approved of. You will be the purchaser; you desire to buy, it is to you that one desires to sell."

Madame de Maintenon began to laugh, and besought the Marquise to believe that she had neither the desire nor the money for that object.

"Money," answered my sister, "will cause you no trouble on this occasion. Money has been coined in your family."[1]

1 Constant d'Aubigné, father of Madame de Maintenon,

Madame de Maintenon, profoundly moved, said to the Marquise:

"I thought, madam, that I had come to see Madame de Montespan, to look at her stuffs from the seraglio, and not to receive insults. All your teasing affects me, because up to to-day I believed in your kindly feeling. It has been made clear to me now that I must put up with this loss; but, whatever be your injustice towards me, I will not depart from my customs or from my element. The Superintendence of the Queen's Council is *for sale*, or it is not; either way it is all the same to me. I have never made any claim to this office, and I never shall."

These words, of which I perceived the sincerity, touched me. I made some trifling excuses to the lady-in-waiting, and, tired of all these insignificant mysteries, I went and took the anonymous letter from my bureau and showed it to the governess.

She read it thoughtfully. After having read it, she assured me that this script *was a riddle to her.*

Madame de Maintenon, on leaving us, made

---

in his wild youth, was said to have taken refuge in a den of coiners.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

quite a deep curtsey to my sister, which caused me pain, preserving an icy gravity and exaggerating her salutation and her curtsey.

When we were alone, I confessed to the Marquise de Thianges that her words had passed all bounds, and that she could have reached her end by *other means*.

"I cannot endure that woman," she answered. "She knows that you have made her, that without you she would be languishing still in her little apartment in the Marée; and when for more than a year she sees you neglected by the King and almost deserted, she abandons you to your destiny, and does not condescend to offer you any consolation. I have mortified her; I do not repent of it in the least, and every time that I come across her I shall permit myself that gratification.

"What is she thinking of at her age, with her pretensions to a fine figure, an ethereal carriage and beauty? And yet it must be admitted that her complexion is not made up. She has the sheen of the lily mingled with that of the rose, and her eyes exhibit a smiling vivacity which leaves our great coquettes of the day far behind!"

"She is nature unadorned as far as her complexion goes, believe me," said I to my sister. "During my constant journeys she has always slept at my side, and her face at waking has always been as at noon and all day long. She related to us once at the Maréchale d'Albret, where I knew her, that at the Martinique—that distant country which was her cradle—an ancient negress, well preserved and robust, had been kind enough to take her into her dwelling. This woman led her one day into the woods. She stripped of its bark some shrub, after having sought it a long time. She grated this bark and mixed it with the juice of chosen herbs. She wrapped up all this concoction in half a banana skin, and gave the specific to the little d'Aubigné.

"This mess having no nasty taste, the little girl consented to return fifteen or twenty times into the grove, where her negress carefully composed and served up to her the same feast.

"'Why do you care to give me this green paste?' the young creole asked her one day.

"The old woman said: 'My dear child, I cannot wait till you have enough sense to learn to under-

stand these plants, for I love you as if you were my own daughter, and I want to leave you a *secret* which will cause you to live a long time. Though I look as I do, I am 138 *years old already*. I am the oldest person in the colony, and this paste that I make for you has preserved my strength and my freshness. It will produce the same effect on my dear little girl, and will keep her young and pretty too for a long time.'

"This negress, unhappily, fell asleep one day under a wild pear-tree in the Savannah, and a crocodile came out of the river hard by and devoured her."

"I have heard tell," replied my sister, "that Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, after the death of her mother, or husband, was bound by the ties of a close friendship with Ninon de l'Enclos, whose beauty made such a sensation among the gallants, and still occupies them.

"One was assured, you know, that Ninon possesses a *potion*, and that in her generosity to her friend, *the fair Indian*, she lent her her phial of elixir."

"No, no," said I to the Marquise, "that piece

of gallantry of Ninon is only a myth; it is the *composition* of Martinique, or of the negress, which is the real recipe of Madame de Maintenon. She talked of it one day, when I was present, in the King's carriage. His Majesty said to her: 'I am astonished that, with your natural intelligence, you have not kept in your mind the nature of this Indian shrub and herbs; with such a secret, you would be able to-day to make many happy, and there are some kings who, to grow young again, would give you half their empire.'

"'I am not a worshipper of riches,' said this mistress of talk; 'bad kings might offer me all the treasures and crowns they liked, and I would not make them young again.'

"'*And me, madam,*' said the Prince, '*would you consent to make me young again?*'

"'You will not need it for a long time,' she replied cleverly, with a smile; "but when the moment comes, or is near, I should set about it with zeal.'

"The whole carriage applauded this reply, and the King took the hand of the Marquise and insisted on kissing it."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CASKET OF M. DE LAUZUN — HIS HISTORICAL GALLERY — HE MAKES SOME NUNS — M. DE LAUZUN IN THE LOTTERY — THE LOSER WINS — QUEEN OUT OF PIQUE — LETTER FROM THE QUEEN OF PORTUGAL — THE INGRATITUDE OF M. DE LAUZUN.

TWICE during the captivity of M. de Lauzun the Queen of Portugal had charged her ambassador to carry to the King that young Sovereign's solicitations in favour of the disgraced gentleman. Each time the negotiators had been answered with vague and ambiguous words; with those promises which potentates are not chary of, even between themselves, and which we poor mortals of the second rank call Court Holy Water. These exertions of the Court of Lisbon were speedily discovered, and it then became known how many women of high degree M. de Péguilain had the honour of fluttering. The officer of d'Artagnan, who had the task of seizing his papers when he

was arrested to be taken to Pignerol, was obliged, in the course of his duty, to open a rather large casket, where he found the portraits of more than sixty women, of whom the greater number lived almost in the odour of sanctity. There were descriptive or biographical notes upon all these heroines, and correspondence to match. His Majesty had cognisance of it, and forbade the publication of the names. But the Marquis d'Artagnan and his subordinate officer committed some almost inevitable indiscretions, and all these ladies found their names public property. Several of them, who were either widows or young ladies, retired into convents, not daring to show their faces in the light of day.

The Queen of Portugal, before this scandal, had passionately loved the Marquis de Lauzun. She was then called Mademoiselle d'Aumale, and her sister—who was soon afterwards Duchess of Savoy — was called at Paris Mademoiselle de Némours. These two Princesses, after having exchanged confidences and confessions, were astonished and grieved to find themselves antagonists and rivals. Happily they had a saving wit, both

of them, and made a treaty of peace, by which it was recognised and agreed that, since their patrimony was small, it should be neither divided nor drawn upon, in order that it might make of M. de Lauzun, when he came to marry, a rich man and great lord. The two rivals, in the excess of their love, stipulated that this indivisible inheritance should be drawn for by lot, that the victorious number should have M. de Lauzun thrown in, and that the losing number should go and bury herself in a convent.

Mademoiselle d'Aumale — that is to say, the pretty blonde—won Monsieur de Lauzun; but he, being *bizarre* in his tastes, and who only had a fancy for the brunette (the less charming of the two), went and besought the King to refuse his consent.

Mademoiselle d'Aumale thought of dying of grief and pique, and, as a consequence of her despair, listened to the proposals of the King of Portugal, and consented to take a crown.

The disgrace and imprisonment of her old friend having reached her ear, this Princess gave him the honour of her tears, although she had two

husbands alive. Twice she solicited his liberty, which was certainly not granted in answer to her prayers.

When she learned of the release of the prisoner, she showed her joy publicly at it, in the middle of her Court; wrote her congratulations upon it to Mademoiselle, apparently to annoy her, and, a few days afterwards, indited with her own hand the letter you are going to read, addressed to the King, which was variously criticised.

"To His Majesty the King of France.

"Brother,—Kings owe one another no account of their motives of action, especially when their authority falls heavily upon the officers of their own palace, till then invested with their confidence and overwhelmed with the tokens of their kindness. The disgrace of the Marquis de Lauzun can only appear in my eyes an act of justice, coming as it does from the justest of Sovereigns. So I confined myself in the past to soliciting for this lord — gifted with all the talents, with bravery and merit — Your Majesty's pity and indulgence. He owed later the end of his suffering, not to my instances, but to your magnanimity. I rejoice at the change in his destiny, and I have charged my ambassador at your Court to express my sincere participation in it. To-day, Sire, I beg you to accept

my thanks. Monsieur de Lauzun, so they assure me, has not been restored to his offices, and though still young, does not obtain employment in his country, where men of feeling and of talent are innumerable. Allow us, Sire, to summon this exceptional gentleman to my State, where French officers win easily the kindly feelings of my nobles, accustomed as they are to cherish all that is born in your illustrious Empire. I will give Monsieur de Lauzun a command worthy of him, worthy of me—a command that will enable him to render lasting and essential services to my Crown and to yours. Do not refuse me this favour, which does not at all impoverish your armies, and which may be of use to a kingdom of which you are the protector and the friend.

"Accept, Sire, &c."

I did not see the answer which was vouchsafed to this singular letter; the King did not judge me worthy to enjoy that confidence that he had made no difficulty in granting to me formerly; but he confided in Madame de Maintenon, and even charged her to obtain the opinion of mademoiselle touching this matter, and mademoiselle, who never hid aught from me, brought the details of it to my country-house.

This Princess, now enlightened as to the falseness of Monsieur de Lauzun, entreated the King

to give up this gentleman to the blonde Queen, or to give him a command himself.

The Marquis de Lauzun, having learnt the steps taken by the Queen of Portugal, whom he had never been able to endure, grew violently angry, and said in twenty houses that he had not come out of one prison to throw himself into another.

These were all the thanks the Queen got for her efforts; and, like Mademoiselle de Montpensier, she detested, with all her soul, the man she had loved with all her heart.

The Marquis de Lauzun was one of the handsomest men in the world; but his character spoiled everything.

CHAPTER XXV

THE NEPHEWS, THE NIECES, THE COUSINS AND THE BROTHER OF MADAME DE MAINTENON — THE KING'S *DÉBUT*—THE MARSHAL'S SILVER STAFF.

THE family of Madame de Maintenon had not only neglected but despised her when she was poor and living on her pension of two thousand francs. Since my protection and favour had brought her into contact with the sun that gives life to all things, and this radiant star had shed on her his own proper rays and light, all her relatives in the direct, oblique, and collateral line had remembered her, and one saw no one but them in her ante-chambers, in her chamber and at Court.

Some of them were not examples of deportment and good-breeding; they were gentlemen who had spent all their lives in little castles in Angoumois and Poitou, a kind of noble ploughmen, who had only their silver swords to distinguish them from their vine-growers and herds. Others, to be

just, honoured the new position of the Marquise; and amongst those I must place first the Marquis de Langallerie and the two sons of the Marquis de Villette, his cousin-german. The Abbé d'Aubigné, whom she had discovered obscurely hidden among the priests of Saint-Sulpice, she had herself presented to the King, who had discovered in him the air of an apostle, and then to Père de la Chaise, who had hastened to make him Archbishop of Rouen, reserving for him *in petto* the cardinal's hat, if the favour of the lady-in-waiting was maintained.

Among her lady relatives who had come from the provinces at the rumour of this favour, the Marquise distinguished and exhibited with satisfaction the three Mademoiselles de Sainte-Hermine, the daughters of a Villette, if I am not mistaken, and pretty and graceful all three of them. She had also brought to her Court, and more particularly attached to her person, a very pretty child, only daughter of the Marquis de Villette, and sister, consequently, of the Comte and of the Chevalier de Villette, whom I have previously mentioned. This swarm of nephews, cousins and nieces gar-

nished the armchairs and sofas of her chamber. They served as comrades and playfellows to the legitimate Princes and as pages-of-honour to my daughter; and when the carriage of the Marquise came into the country for her drives, the whole of this pretty colony formed a train and Court for her, a proof of her credit.

The Marquise had a brother, her elder by four or five years, to whom she was greatly attached, judging from what we heard her say, and to promote whom we saw her work from the very first. This brother, who was called Le Comte d'Aubigné, lacked neither charm nor grace. He even assumed, when he wished, an excellent manner; but this Cavalier, his own master from his childhood, knew no other law but his own pleasures and desires. He had made people talk about him in his earliest youth; he awoke the same buzz of scandal now that he was fifty. Madame de Maintenon, hoping to reform him, and wishing to constrain him to beget them an heir, made him consent to the bonds of marriage. She had just discovered a very pretty heiress of very good family, when he married secretly the daughter of a mere Procureur du Roi.

The lady-in-waiting, being unable to undo what had been done, submitted to this *unequal alliance;* and as her sister-in-law, ennobled by her husband, was none the less a Countess, she, too, was presented.

The young person, aged fifteen at the most, was naturally very bashful. When she found herself in this vast hall, between a double row of persons of importance, whose fixed gaze never left her, she forgot all the bows, all the elaborate curtseys, in fine, all the difficult procedure of a formal presentation, that her sister-in-law and dancing-masters had been making her rehearse for twenty days past. The child lost her head, and burst into tears. The King took compassion on her, and despatched the Comtesse de Mérinville to go and act as her guide or mistress. Supported by this guardian angel, Madame d'Aubigné gained heart; went through her pausing, her interrupted curtseys, to the end, and came in fairly good countenance to the King's chair, who smiled encouragement upon her. While these things were taking place in the gallery, Madame de Maintenon, in despair, her eyes full of tears, had to make an effort not to weep. With that wit, of

which she is so proud, she should have been the first to laugh at this piece of childishness, which was not particularly new. The embarrassment, the torture in which I saw her, filled me with a strong desire to laugh. It was noticed; it was held a crime; and His Majesty himself was kind enough to scold me for it.

"I felt the same embarrassment," he said to us, "the first time M. le Cardinal desired to put me forward. It was a question of receiving an ambassador, and of making a short reply to his ceremonial address. I knew my reply by heart; it was not more than eight or ten lines at the most. I was repeating it every minute while at play, for five or six days. When it was necessary to perform in person before this throng, my childish memory was confused. All my part was forgotten in my fear, and I could only utter these words: '*Your address, M. l'Ambassadeur—M. l'Ambassadeur, your address.*' My mother, the Queen, grew very red, and was as confused as I was. But my godfather, the Cardinal, finished this reply for me, which he had composed himself, and was pleased to see me out of the difficulty."

This anecdote, evidently related to console the Marquise, filled her with gratitude. They spoke of nothing else at Versailles for two days; after which, Madame la Comtesse d'Aubigné became, in her turn, a woman of experience, who judged the new *débutantes* severely, perhaps, every time that the occasion arose.

The Comte d'Aubigné passed from an inferior government to a government of some importance. He made himself beloved by endorsing a thousand petitions destined for his sister, *the Monarch's friend;* but his immoderate expenditure caused him to contract debts that this sister would only pay five or six times.

The Duc de Vivonne, my brother, laughed at him in society; he unceasingly outraged by his clumsiness his sister's sense of discretion. One day, in a gaming-house, seeing the table covered with gold, the Maréchale exclaimed at the door: "I will wager that d'Aubigné is here, and makes all this display; it is a magnificence worthy of him." "Yes, truly," said the brother of the favourite, "I have received *my silver staff, you see!*" That was an uncouth impertinence, for assuredly

M. de Vivonne had not owed this dignity to my favour. The siege of Candia, and a thousand other distinguished actions, in which he had immortalised himself, called him to this exalted position, which I dare to say he has even rendered illustrious.

The Comte d'Aubigné's saying was no less successful on that account, and his sister, who did not approve at all of this scandalous scene, had the good sense to condemn her most ridiculous gamester, and to make excuses for him to my brother and me.

CHAPTER XXVI

POLITICAL INTRIGUE IN HUNGARY—DIGNITY OF THE KING OF THE ROMANS—THE GOOD APPEARANCE OF A GERMAN PRINCE—THE TURKS AT VIENNA—THE DUC DE LORRAINE—THE KING OF ROME.

WHATEVER the conduct of the King may have been towards me, I do not write out of resentment or to avenge myself. But since, in the midst of the peace which the leisure that he has given me leaves me, I feel some satisfaction in inditing the memoirs of my life, which was attached to his so closely, and wish to relate with sincerity the things I have seen. What would be the use of memoirs from which sincerity were absent? Whom could they inspire with a desire of reading them?

The King was born profoundly ambitious. All the actions of his public life bore witness to it. It would be useless for him to rebut the charge; all his aims, all his political work, all his sieges,

all his battles, all his bloody exploits, prove it. He had robbed the Emperor of an immense quantity of towns and territories in succession. The greatness of the House of Austria irritated him. He had begun by weakening it in order to dominate it; and, in bringing it under his sway, he hoped to draw to himself the respect and submission of the Germanic Electoral body, and cause the Imperial Crown to pass to his house, as soon as the occasion should present itself.

We had often heard him say: "*Monseigneur has all the good appearance of a German Prince.*" This singular compliment, this praise, was not without motive. The King wished that this opinion and this portrait should go straight into Germany, and create there a kind of naturalisation and adoption for his son.

He had resolved to have him elected and proclaimed King of the Romans, a dignity which opens, as one knows, the road to the imperial greatness. To attain this result, His Majesty, seconded perfectly by his minister, Louvois, employed the following means.

By his order M. de Louvois sent the Comte

de Nointel to Vienna, at the moment when that Power was working to extend the *twenty years' truce* concluded by Hungary with the Sultan. The French envoy promised secretly his adhesion to the Turks; and the latter, delighted at the intervention of the French, became so overbearing towards the Imperial Crown that that Power was reduced to refusing too severe conditions.

Sustained by the insinuations and the promises of France, the Sultan demanded that Hungary should be left in the state it was in 1655; that henceforward that kingdom should pay him an annual tribute of fifty thousand florins; that the fortifications of Leopoldstadt and Gratz should be destroyed; that the chief of the revolted towns —Nitria, Eckof, the Island of Schutt, and the fort of Murann, at Tekelai—should be ceded; that there should be a general amnesty and restitution of their estates, dignities, offices and privileges without restriction.

By this the infidels would have found themselves masters of the whole of Hungary, and would have been able to come to the very gates of Vienna, without fear of military commanders

or of the Emperor. It was obvious that they were only seeking a pretext for a quarrel, and that at the suggestion of France, which was quite disposed to profit by the occasion.

The Sultan knew very little of our King. The latter had his army ready; his plan was to enter, or rather to fall upon, the imperial territories, when the consternation and the danger in them should be at their height; and then he counted on turning to his advantage the goodwill of the German Princes, who, to be extricated from their difficulty, would not fail to offer to himself, *as liberator*, the Imperial Crown, or, at least, the dignity of King of the Romans and Vicar of the Empire to his son, M. le Dauphin.

In effect, hostilities had hardly commenced on the part of the Turks, hardly had their first successes struck terror into the heart of the German Empire, when the King, the real political author of these disasters, proposed to the German Emperor to intervene suddenly, *as auxiliary*, and even to restore Lorraine to him, and his new conquests, on condition that the dignity of *the King of the Romans* should be bestowed on his son.

France, this election once proclaimed, engaged herself to bring an army of 60,000 men, nominally of *the King of the Romans*, into Hungary, to drive out utterly the *common enemy*. German officers would be admitted, like French, into this Roman army; and more, the King of France and the new King of the Romans engaged themselves to set back the imperial frontiers on that side as far as Belgrade, or Weissembourg in Greece. A powerful fleet was to appear in the Mediterranean to support these operations; and the King, wishing to crown his generosity, offered to renounce for ever the ancient possessions, and all the rights of Charlemagne, his acknowledged forefather or ancestor.

Whilst these dreams of ambition were being seriously presented to the unhappy Imperial Court of Vienna, the Turks, to the number of 300,000 men, had swept across Hungary like a torrent. They arrived before the capital of the Empire of Germany just at the moment when the Court had left it. They immediately invested this panic-stricken town, and the inhabitants of Vienna believed themselves lost. But the young Duc

de Lorraine, our King's implacable enemy, had left the capital in the best condition and pitched outside Vienna, in a position from which he could severely harass the besieging Turks.

He tormented them, he raided them, while he waited for the saving reinforcements which were to be brought up by the King of Poland, and the natural allies of the Empire. This succour arrived at last, and after four or five combats, well directed and most bloody, they threw the Ottomans into disorder. The Duc de Lorraine immortalised himself during this brilliant campaign, which he finished by annihilating the Turks near Barkan.

France had remained in a state of inaction in the midst of all these great events. I saw the discomfiture of our ministers and the King when the success of the Imperialists reached them. But the time had passed when my affections and those of my master were akin. Free from henceforth to follow the impulses of my conscience and of my sense of justice, I rejoiced sincerely at the great qualities of the poor Duc de Lorraine, and at the humiliation of the cruel Turks, who had been so misled.

The Elective Princes of the Germanic Empire once more rallied round their august head, and disavowed almost all their secret communications with the Cabinet of Versailles. The Emperor, having escaped from these great perils, addressed some noble and touching complaints to our Monarch ; and Monseigneur was not elected *King of the Romans*, a disappointment which he hardly noticed, and by which he was very little disturbed.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE PRINCE OF ORANGE — THE ORANGE COACH — THE BOWLS OF ORANGES — THE ORANGE BLOSSOMS — THE TOWN OF ORANGE—JESUITS OF ORANGE—REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

THE King, by the last peace, signed at Nimègue, had engaged to restore the Principality of Orange to William, Stadtholder and Generalissimo of the Dutch. This article was one of those which he had found most repugnant to him, for nothing can be compared with the profound aversion which the mere name inspired in the Monarch. He pushed this hatred so far that, having one day noticed from the heights of his balcony a superb new equipage, of which the body was painted with orange-coloured varnish, he sent and asked the name of the owner; and, on their reporting to him that this coach belonged to a provincial intendant, a relative of the Chancellor, His Majesty said, the same even-

ing, to the magistrate-minister: "Your relative ought to show more discretion in the choice of the colours he displays."

This coach appeared no more, and the silk and cloth mercers had their stuffs re-dyed.

Another day, at the high-table, the King, seeing four bowls of big oranges brought in, said aloud, before the public: "Take away that fruit, which has nothing in its favour but its look. There is nothing more dangerous or unhealthy."

On the morrow these words spread through the capital, and the courtiers only dared eat oranges privately and in secret.

As for me, with my love for the scent of orange blossoms, the Monarch's petulance once more affected me extremely. I was obliged for some time to give it up, like the others, and take to amber, the favourite scent of my master, which my nerves could not endure.

Before surrendering the town of Orange to the commissioners of the Kinglet of the Dutch, the King of France had the walls thrown down, all the fortifications razed, and the public buildings, certain convents, and the library of the town

stripped of their works of art. These measures irritated Prince William, who, on that account alone, wished to recommence the war; but the Emperor and the allies heard his complaints with little attention. They even besought him to leave things as they were. M. d'Orange is a real firebrand; he could not endure the severities of the King without reprisals, and scarcely was he once more in possession of his little isolated sovereignty than he annoyed the Catholics in it, caused all possible alarms to the sisters of mercy and nuns, imposed enormous taxes on the monks, and drove out the Jesuits with unheard-of insults.

The King received hospitably all these humiliated or persecuted folk; and as he was given to understand that the Orange Protestants were secretly sowing discontent amongst his Calvinists and French Lutherans, he prepared the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the famous political measure the abrogation of which took place a short time afterwards.

I saw, in the hands of the King, a document of sixty pages, printed at Orange, after its restitution, in which it was clearly specified that Hugh

Capet had set himself on the throne *irregularly*, and in which the author went to the point of saying that the Catholic religion *was only an idolatry*, and that the peoples would only be happy and free after the general introduction of the *Reformation*. The Maréchal de Vivonne came and told me, in strict confidence, that the Jesuits, out of resentment, had forged this document, and printed the pamphlet themselves; but M. de Louvois, who, through his father, the Chancellor, and his brother, the Archbishop of Rheims, was associated with them, maintained that the incendiary libel was really the work of the Protestants.

My residence at the Court having opened my eyes sufficiently to the wickedness of men, I will not give my opinion, amid these angry charges and recriminations. I confine myself to relating what I have seen.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SICKNESS — DEATH OF THE QUEEN—HER LAST WORDS—THE KING'S AFFLICTION—HIS SAYING—SECOND ANONYMOUS LETTER — CONVERSATION WITH LA DAUPHINE—MADAME DE MAINTENON INTERVENES.

WHILE the Turks and the Imperialists were fighting in the plains of Hungary, the King, followed by all his Court, had made his way towards the frontiers of Alsace. He reviewed countless battalions, he made promotions, and gave brilliant repasts and fêtes.

The season was a little trying, and the Queen, though born in Spain, did not accommodate herself to the June heat. As soon as business permitted, they took the road to the capital, and returned to Versailles with some speed.

Scarcely had they arrived, when the Queen fell ill; it did not deserve the name of sickness. It was only an indisposition, pure and simple—an abscess in the armpit; that was all. Fagon, the

boldest and most audacious of all who ever exercised the art of Æsculapius, decided that, to lessen the running, it was necessary to draw the blood to another quarter. In spite of the opinion of his colleagues, he ordered her to be bled, and all her blood rushed to her heart. In a short time the Princess grew worse in an alarming fashion, and in a few moments we heard that she was in her death-agony; in a few moments more we heard of her death. 1683

The King wept bitterly at first, as we had seen him weep for Marie de Mancini, Louise de la Vallière, Henrietta of England, and the Duchesse de Fontanges—dead of his excesses. He set out at once for the Château of Saint-Cloud, which belonged to his brother; and Monsieur, wishing to leave the field clear for him, went away to the Palais-Royal with his disagreeable wife and their numerous children.

His Majesty returned two days afterwards to the Château of Versailles, where he, his son, and all the family sprinkled holy water over the deceased; and this little ceremony being finished, they regained in silence the Château de Saint-Cloud.

The aspect of that *gloomy Salon of Peace*, converted into a catafalque; the sight of that small bier, on which a beautiful, good and indulgent wife was reposing; those silent images, so full of speech, awoke the just remorse of the King. His tears began once more to flow abundantly, and he was heard to say these words:

"*Dear, kind friend, this is the first grief you have caused me in twenty years!*"

The Infanta, as I have already related, had granted in these latter days her entire confidence and affection to her daughter-in-law's lady-in-waiting. Finding herself sick and in danger, she summoned Madame de Maintenon; and understanding soon that those famous Court physicians did not know how ill she was, and that she was drawing near her last hour, she begged this woman, so ready in all things, to leave her no more, and to be good enough *to prepare her for death.*

The Marquise wept bitterly, and perhaps even sincerely; for, being unable to forsee, at that period, all that was to befall her in the issue, she probably entertained the hope of attaching herself for good to this excellent Princess. In losing her,

she foresaw, or feared, if not adversity, at least a decline.

The King was courting her, it is true, and favouring her already with marked respect; but Françoise d'Aubigné, thoughtful and meditative as I knew her to be, could certainly not have failed to appreciate the voluptuous and inconstant character of the Monarch. She had seen several notorious friendships collapse in succession; and it is not at the age of six or seven-and-forty that one can build castles in Spain to dwell in with young love.

The Queen, before the beginning of her death-agony, herself drew a splendid ring from her finger, and would pass it over the finger of the Marquise, to whom, some months before, she had already given her portrait. It was asserted that her last words were these: "*Adieu, my dearest Marquise; to you I recommend and confide the King.*"

In accordance with a recommendation so binding and so precise, Madame de Maintenon followed the Monarch to Saint-Cloud; and, as great afflictions are fain to be understood and shared, these two desolate hearts shut themselves up in one room, in order to groan in concert.

The Queen having been taken to Saint-Denis, the King, Madame de Maintenon and the Court returned to Versailles, where the royal family went into mourning for the period prescribed by law and custom.

The Queen's large and small apartments, so handsome, new, splendid and magnificent, became the habitation of Madame la Dauphine; so that the lady-in-waiting, in virtue of her office, returned, in the most natural manner, to those apartments where she had held authority.

The Queen, without having the genius of conversation and discussion, lacked neither *aplomb* nor a taste for the proprieties; she knew how to support, or, at least, to preside over, a circle. The young Dauphine had neither the desire, nor the patience, nor the tact. The Prince charged the lady-in-waiting to do these things for her. We repaired in full dress to the Princess — to present our homages to Madame de Maintenon. One must admit she threw her heart into it; that is to say, she drew out, as far as possible, the Monarch's daughter-in-law, inspiring into her every moment amiable questions or answers,

which she had taken pains to embellish and adorn in her best manner.

The King arrived; I then had the pleasure of seeing him, not two paces from me, before my very eyes, saying witty and agreeable things to the Marquise; while he only talked to me of the rain and the weather, always cursorily.

It was then that I received a second anonymous letter, in the same handwriting, the same style, the same tone as that of which mention has been made. I transcribe it; it is curious.

"To Madame la Marquise de Montespan.

"Madam,—You have not followed my former advice. The opportunity has gone by; it is too late. Your superintendence is left with you, and there are four or five hundred thousand livres lying idle; for you will not be able to sell the superintendence of a household, and of a council, which are in a tomb at Saint-Denis! Happily you are rich, and what would be a disaster to another fortune is scarcely more than a slight disappointment to you. I take the respectful liberty of talking once more with the prettiest and wittiest woman of her century, in order to submit to her certain ideas, and to offer her a fresh piece of advice which I believe important.

"The Queen, moved by a generosity seldom found in her peers, pardoned you to some degree

your theft of her spouse; she pardoned you in order to be agreeable to him, and to prove to him that, being his most sincere friend, she could not bring herself to contest his affections and his pastimes. But this sublime philosophy is at an end; the excellent heart of this Queen is at Val-de-Grâce; it will beat no more, neither for her volatile husband nor for anyone whatsoever.

"Madame la Dauphine, brought up in German severity, and hardly accustomed to the atmosphere of her new country, neither likes nor respects you, nor has any indulgence for you. She barely suffers the presence of your children, although brothers of her husband. How should she tolerate yours? It appears it is plain, Madame la Marquise, that your name has found no place or footing on her list, and that she would rather not meet you often in her *salons*. If one may even speak to you confidentially, she has thus expressed herself; it would be cruel for you to hear of it from any other being but me.

"Believe me, believe a man as noted for his good qualities as for his weaknesses. He will never *drive* you away, for you are the mother of his beloved children, and he has loved you himself tenderly. However, his coldness is going to increase. Will you be sufficiently light-hearted, or sufficiently imprudent, to await on a counterscarp the rigours of December and January?

"Keep your wit always, Madame la Marquise, and with this wit, which is such a charming resource, do not divest yourself of your noble pride.

"I am, always, your respectful and devoted servant, "THE UNKNOWN OF THE CHÂTEAU."

At the time of the first letter, when I had hesitated some time, doubtful between Madame de Maintenon and the King, it occurred to me to suspect the Queen for a moment; but there was no possibility now of imputing to this Princess, dead and gone, the unbecoming annoyance that an unknown permitted himself to cause me.

On this occasion I chose my part resolutely; and, not wishing to busy myself any longer with these pretended *friendly counsels* which my pride forbade me to follow, I took these two insolent letters and burned them. This last letter, after all, spoke very truly. I remarked distinctly, in the looks and manner of the Dauphine, that ridiculous and clumsy animosity which she had taken a fancy to lavish on me.

As she was not, in my eyes, so sublime a personage, that a lady of quality might not enter into conversation with her, I approached her arm-chair with the intention of upsetting her haughtiness and pride by compelling her to speak to me before everybody.

I complimented her on her *coiffure*, and even thanked her for the honour she did me in *imitating* me; she reddened, and I entreated her not to put herself about, assuring her that her face looked much better in its habitual pallor. These words redoubled her dissatisfaction, and her redness then became a veritable scarlet flame.

Passing forthwith to another subject, I pronounced in a few words a panegyric on the late Queen; to which I skilfully added that, from the first day, she had been able to understand the French graces and assume them with intelligence and taste.

"Her Spanish accent troubled her for a year or two longer," added I; "strictly speaking, this accent, derived from the Italian has nothing disagreeable in it; while the English, Polish, Russian and German accent is inharmonious in itself, and is lost with great difficulty here."

Seeing that my reflections irritated her, I stopped short, and made my excuses by saying to her, "Madam, these are only general reflections. Your Highness is an exception and has struck us all, as you have nothing German left but memories, and, perhaps, regrets."

She answered me, stammering, that she had not been destined in the first place for the throne of France, and that this want of forethought had injured her education; then, feeling a spark of courage in her heart, she said that the late Queen had more than once confided to her that the Court of France was disorderly in its fashions, because it was never the Princesses who gave it its tone as elsewhere.

Madame de Maintenon perceived quickly the consequences of this saying; for the peace of the Princess, she retorted quickly, "In France, the Princesses are so kind and obliging as to follow the fashions; but the good examples and good tone comes to us from our Princes, and our only merit is to imitate them with ingenuity."

CHAPTER XXIX

JUDGMENT GIVEN BY THE CHÂTELET — THE MARQUIS D'ANTIN RESTORED TO HIS FATHER—THE JUDGMENT IS NOT EXECUTED—FULL MOURNING—FUNERAL SERVICE—THE NOTARY OF SAINT-ÉLIX—THE *LETTRE DE CACHET*.

THE Marquis d'Antin, my son, with the consent of the King, had remained under my control, and had never consented to quit me to rejoin his father. M. de Montespan, at the time of the *suit for judicial separation* before the Châtelet, had caused his advocate to maintain this barbarous argument, that a son, though brought into the world by his mother, ought to side against her if domestic storms arise, and prefer to everybody and everything the man whose arms and name he bears.

The tribunal of the Châtelet, trampling upon maternal tenderness and humanity, granted his claim in full; and I was advised not to appeal, now that I had obtained the thing essential to me, *a separation in body and estate.*

M. de Montespan dared not come himself to Paris in order to execute the sentence; he sent for that purpose two officers of artillery, his friends or relatives, who were *authorised* to see the young Marquis at his college, but not to withdraw him before the close of his humanities and classes. These gentlemen, having sent word to the father that the young d'Antin was my living image, he replied to them, that they were to insist no longer, to abandon their mission, and to abandon a child who would never enjoy his favour since he resembled myself. Owing to this happy circumstance I was able to preserve my son.

Since these unhappy disputes, and the suit which made so much noise, I had heard no more talk of M. de Montespan in society. I only learned from travellers that he was building, a short distance from the Pyrenees, a château of a noble and royal appearance, where he had gathered together all that art, joined with good taste, could add to nature; that this château of Saint-Élix, adorned with the finest orange grove in the world, was ascribed to the liberality of the King. The Marquis, hurt by this mistake of his neighbours, which he called

an *accusation*, published a *solemn justification* in these ingenuous provinces, and he proved, as a clerk might do to his master, that this enormous expenditure was exclusively his own.

Suddenly the report of his death spread through the capital, and the Marquis d'Antin received without delay, an official letter with a great, black seal, which announced to him this most lamentable event. The notary of Saint-Élix, in sending him this sad news, took the opportunity of enclosing a certified copy of the will.

This testament, replete with malignity, having been freely published in the capital, I cannot refrain from reproducing it in these writings.

Here are its principal clauses:—

"In the name of the most blessed Trinity, &c.

"Since I cannot congratulate myself on a wife, who, diverting herself as much as possible, has caused me to pass my youth and my life in celibacy, I content myself with leaving her my life-sized portrait, by Bourdon, begging her to place it in her bed-chamber, when the King ceases to come there.

"Although the Marquis de Pardailhan d'Antin is prodigiously like his mother (a circumstance of which I have been lamentably sensible!), I do not hesitate to believe him my son. In this quality I give and

bequeath to him all my goods, as my eldest son, imposing on him, nevertheless, the following legacies, liberalities, and charges:—

"I leave to their Highnesses, M. le Duc du Maine, M. le Comte de Toulouse, Mademoiselle de Nantes, and Mademoiselle de Blois (born during my marriage with their mother, and consequently my *presumptive* children) their right of legitimacy on the charge and condition of their bearing in one of their quarterings the Pardailhan-Montespan arms.

"I take the respectful liberty of here thanking my King for the extreme kindness which he has shown to my wife, *née* de Mortemart, to my son d'Antin, to his brothers and sisters, both dead and living, and also to myself, who have only been dismissed, and kept in exile.

"In recognition of which I give and bequeath to His Majesty my vast château of Montespan, begging him to create and institute there a community of *Repentant Ladies*, to wear the habit of Carmelites or of the Daughters of the Conception, on the special charge and condition that he place my wife at the head of the said convent, and appoint her to be first Abbess.

"I attach an annuity of sixty thousand livres to this noble institution, hoping that this will make up the deficiency, if there be any.

"De Pardailhan de Gondran Montespan,

"Separated, although inseparable spouse."

A family council being held to decide what I must do on this occasion, Madame de Thianges,

M. de Vivonne, and M. de Blanville-Colbert decided that I must wear the same full mourning as my son d'Antin. As for this odious will, it was agreed that it should not even be spoken of, and that the notary of Saint-Élix should be written to at once, to place it in the hands of a third party, of whom he would be presently notified at the place. The Marquis d'Antin at once had my equipage and his own draped. We hastened to put all our household into mourning from top to toe, and the funeral service, with full ritual, was ordered to be performed at the parish church. The very same day, as the family procession was about to set out on its way to the church, a sort of sergeant, dressed in black, handed a fresh letter to the Marquis d'Antin. It contained these words:

"The notary of Saint-Élix deserves a canonry in the Chapter of Charenton; it is not the Marquis de Montespan who is dead; they have played a trick on you.

"The only truth in all of it is the will, of which the notary of Saint-Élix has been in too great a hurry to send a copy. A thousand excuses to M. le Marquis d'Antin and his mother, Madame la Marquise."

It was necessary to send orders at once to the

parish church to take away the catafalque and the drapings. The priests and musicians were paid as if they had done what they ought to do; and my *widowhood*, which, at another time, might have been of such importance, was, I dare to say, indifferent to me.

The King was informed of what had just taken place in my family. He spoke of it as an *extremely disagreeable affair*. I answered him, that it was far more disagreeable for me than for anyone else. His Majesty added:

"Tell the Marquis d'Antin to go to Saint-Élix and pay his respects to his father. This journey will also enable him to learn if such a ridiculous will really exists, and if your husband has reached such a pitch of independence. D'Antin will beg him, on my behalf, to tear up that document, and to earn my favour by doing so."

My son, after consulting with His Majesty, started indeed for the Pyrenees. His father at first gave him a cold welcome. The next day the Marquis discovered the secret of pleasing him; and M. de Montespan at this full mourning, this family council, and at the catafalque in the middle of the

church, promised to alter the will on condition that his *lettre de cachet* should be revoked and quashed within the next fortnight.

The King agreed to these demands, which did not any longer affect him. I was the only person sacrificed.

CHAPTER XXX

THE DUC DU MAINE PROVIDED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LANGUEDOC—THE YOUNG PRINCE DE CONTI—HIS PIETY—HIS APOSTASY—THE DUC DE LA FEUILLADE BURLESQUED—THE WATCH SET WITH DIAMONDS—THE FALSE ROBBER—SCENE AMONGST THE SERVANTS.

THE old Duc de Verneuil, natural son of King Henri IV., died during these incidents, leaving the government of Languedoc vacant. The King summoned M. le Duc du Maine at once, and, embracing him with his usual tenderness, he said to him: "My son, though you are very young, I make you Governor of Languedoc. This will make many jealous of you; do not worry about them, I am always here to defend you. Go at once to Mademoiselle's, who has just arrived at Versailles, and tell her what I have done for her adopted child."

I went to thank His Majesty for this favour, which seemed to me very great, since my son

1681 was not twelve years old. The King said to me: "*Here comes the carriage of the Prince de Conti, you may be certain that he comes to ask me for this place.*" In fact, those were the first words of the Prince de Conti.

"The government for which you ask," said the King, "has been for a long time promised to Madame de Maintenon for her Duc du Maine. I intend something else for you, my dear cousin. Trust in me. In giving you my beloved daughter I charged myself with your fortunes; you are on my list, and in the first rank."

The young Prince changed colour. He entreated the King to believe him worthy of his *confidence and esteem*, to which he imprudently added these words: "*My wife was born before M. du Maine.*"

"And you, too," replied His Majesty; "are you any the more sober for that? There are some little youthful extravagances in your conduct which pain me. I leave my daughter in ignorance of them, because I wish her to be at peace. Endeavour to prevent her being informed of them by yourself. Govern yourself as a young man of

your birth ought to govern himself: then I will hand a government over to you with pleasure."

The Prince de Conti appeared to me very much affected by this homily and disappointment. He saluted me, however, with a smile of benevolence and the greatest amenity. We learnt a short time afterwards that his wife* had shed many tears, and was somewhat set against my children and myself. This amiable Princess then was not aware that the government of Languedoc was not granted at my instance, but at the simple desire of Madame de Maintenon; the King had sufficiently explained it.

Just at this moment M. le Prince de Conti had made himself notable by his attachment or his deference towards matters of religion and piety. His superb chariot and his peach-coloured liveries were to be seen, on fête days, at the doors of the great churches. He suddenly changed his manœuvres, and refused to subject himself to restraints which led, or led him no whither. He scoffed publicly at the Jesuits, the Sulpicians, and their formal lectures and confraternities; he refused to distribute round the blessed bread at his parish

* daughter of the Duchess

church, and only heard Mass from his chaplains and in his palace.

This ill-advised behaviour did not improve his position. Madame, his wife, continued to come to Versailles on gala days, or days of reunion, but he and his brother appeared there less and less frequently. They were exceedingly handsome, both of them; not through their father, whose huge nose had rendered him ridiculous, but through the Princess, their mother, Anna or Felicia de Martinozzi, niece of Cardinal Mazarin. God had surpassed Himself in creating that graceful head, and those eyes will never have their match in sweetness and beauty.

Free now to follow their own tastes, which only policy had induced them to dissimulate and constrain, M. de Conti allowed himself all that a young prince, rich and pleasure-loving, could possibly wish in this world. In the midst of these reunions, consecrated to pleasure, and even to debauchery, he loved to signalise his lordly liberality; nothing could stop him, nothing was too extravagant for him. His passion was to remove all obstacles and pay for everybody.

His joyous companions cried out with admiration, and celebrated, in prose and verse, so noble a taste and virtues so rare. The young orphan inhaled this incense with delight; he contracted enormous debts, and soon did not know where to turn to pay them.

The King, well informed of these excesses, commanded M. le Duc de la Feuillade to have the young man followed, and inform himself of all he did.

One day, when M. de la Feuillade himself had followed him too closely, and forced him, for the space of an hour, to scour over all Le Marais in useless and fatiguing zig-zags, M. de Conti, who recognised him perfectly, in spite of his disguise, pretended that his watch, set with diamonds, had been stolen. He pointed out this man as the thief to his ready serving-men, who fell upon M. de la Feuillade, and, stripping him to find the watch, gave the Prince time to escape and reach his place of rendezvous.

The Captain was ill for several days, and even in danger, in consequence of this adventure, which did not improve the credit of M. le Prince de Conti, much as it needed it.

His young and beautiful wife excused him in everything, ignoring, and wishing to ignore, the extent of his guilt and frivolity.

CHAPTER XXXI

A FUNERAL AND DIVERSIONS—SINISTER DREAM—FUNERAL ORATIONS OF THE QUEEN.

It remains for me to relate certain rather curious circumstances in relation to the late Queen, after which I shall speak of her no more in these Memoirs.

She was left for ten days, lying in state, in the mortuary chapel of Versailles, where Mass was being said by priests at four altars from morning till evening. She was finally removed from this magnificent Palace of Enchantment to Saint-Denis. Numerous carriages followed the funeral car, and in all these carriages were the high officials, as well as the ladies, who had belonged to her. But what barbarity! what ingratitude! what a scandal! In all these mournful carriages, people talked and laughed and made themselves agreeable; and the body-guards, as well as the gendarmes and musketeers,

took turns to ride their horses into the open plain and shoot at the birds.

M. le Dauphin, after Saint-Denis, went to lie at the Tuileries, before betaking himself to the service on the following day at Notre-Dame. In the evening, instead of remaining alone and in seclusion in his apartment, as a good son ought to have done, he went to the Palais-Royal to see the Princess Palatine and her husband, whom he had had with him all the day; he *must* have distraction, amusement, and even merry conversations, such as simple *bourgeois* would not permit themselves on so solemn an occasion, were it only out of decorum.

In the midst of these ridiculous and indefensible conversations, the news arrived that the King had broken his arm. The Marquis de Mosny had started on the instant in order to inform the young Prince of it; and du Saussoi, equerry of His Majesty, arrived half-an-hour later, giving the same news, with the details.

The King (who was hunting during the obsequies of his wife) had fallen off his horse, which he had not been able to prevent from stumbling into a ditch full of tall grass and foliage. M. Félix,

a skilful and prudent surgeon, had just set the arm, which was only put out of joint. The King sent word to the Dauphin *not to leave the Tuileries*, and to attend the funeral ceremony on the morrow.

The fair of Saint-Laurence was being held at this moment, although the city of Paris had manifested an intention of postponing it. They were exhibiting to the curious a little wise horse which bowed, calculated, guessed, answered questions, and performed marvels. The King had strictly forbidden his family and the people of the Court to let themselves be seen at this fair. M. le Dauphin, none the less, wished to contemplate, with his own eyes, this extraordinary and wonderful little horse. Consequently, he had to be taken to the Château des Tuileries, where he took a puerile amusement in a spectacle in itself trivial, and, at such a time, scandalous.

The poor Queen would have died of grief if the death of her son had preceded hers against the order of Nature; but the hearts of our children are not disposed like ours, and who knows how I shall be treated myself by mine when I am gone?

With regard to the King's arm, Madame d'Orléans, during the service for the Queen, was pleased to relate to the great Mademoiselle that, three or four days before, she had seen, in a somewhat troublesome and painful dream, the King's horse run away and throw him upon the rocks and brambles of a precipice, from which he was rescued with a broken arm. A lady observed that dreams are but vague and uncertain indications.

"Not mine," replied Madame, with ardour; "they are not like others. Five or six days before the Queen fell ill, I told her, in the presence of Madame la Dauphine, that I had a most alarming dream. I had dreamt that I was in a large church all draped in black. I advanced to the sanctuary; a vault was opened at one side of the altar. Some kind of priests went down, and these folk said aloud, as they came up again, that they had found no place at first; that the cavity having seemed to them too long and deep, they had arranged the biers and had placed there the body *of the lady*. At that point I awoke, quite startled and not myself."

Hardly had the Princess finished her story,

when the Infanta, turning pale, said to her: "Madam, you will see, the dream of the vault refers to me. At the funeral of the Queen of England I noticed, and remember, that the same difficulty occurred at Saint-Denis; they were obliged to push up all the coffins one against the other."

And, in truth, we knew, a few days afterwards, that for this poor Queen, Marie Thérèse, the monks of the abbey had found it necessary to break down a strong barrier of stones in their subterranean church, to remove the first wife of Gaston, mother of Mademoiselle, and find a place for the Spanish Queen, who had arrived in those regions.

There were several funeral orations on this occasion. Not a single one of these official discourses deserved to survive the Queen. There was very little to say about her, I admit; but these professional panegyrists, these liars in surplice, in black cassock, or in purple and mitre, are not too scrupulous to borrow facts and material in cases where the dead person has neglected to furnish or bequeath it them.

In my own case I congratulated myself on this sort of indifference or literary penury; an indiscreet person, sustained by zeal or talent, might have wished to mortify me in a romance combined of satire and religion.

CHAPTER XXXII

JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT—HIS DEATH—HIS GREAT WORKS HIS LAST ADVICE TO THE MARQUISE.

M. COLBERT had been ailing for a long time past. His face bore visible testimony against his health, to which his accumulated and incessant labour had caused the greatest injury. We had just married his son Blainville to my niece, Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente, heiress of the house of Rochehouart. Since this union — the King's work — M. Colbert had somewhat tended in my favour, and I had reason to count on his good offices and kindness. I said to him one day that my quarrel with him was that he did not look after himself, that he ignored all his own worth, treated himself with no more respect than a mere clerk; that he was the indispensable man, the right-hand of the King, his eye of vigilance in everything, and the pillar of his business and his finance.

Without being precisely what one would call

a modest man, M. Colbert was calm of mind, and by nature without pose or presumption. He cared sincerely for the King's glory. He held his tongue on the subject of great enterprises, but employed much zeal and ability in promoting the success of good projects and ideas, such as, for instance, our Indies and Pondicherry.

He had known how to procure, without oppressing anyone, the incalculable sums that had been necessitated, not only by enormous and almost universal wars, but by all those canals, all those ports in the Mediterranean or the ocean, that vast creation of vessels, arsenals, foundries, military houses and hospitals which we had seen springing up in all parts. He had procured by his application, his careful calculations, the wherewithal to build innumerable fortresses, aqueducts, fountains, bridges, the Observatory of Paris, the Royal Hospital of the Invalides, the châteaus of the Tuileries and of Vincennes, the engine and château of Marly, that prodigious château of Versailles, with its Trianon of marble, which by itself might have served as a habitation for the richest Monarchs of the Orient.

He had founded the wonderful glass factories, and those of the Gobelins; he had raised, as though by a magic ring, the Royal Library over the gardens and galleries of Mazarin; and foreigners asked one another, in their surprise, what they must admire most in that monument, the interior pomp of the edifice or its rich collection of books, coins and manuscripts.

To all these works, more than sufficient to immortalise twenty ministers, M. Colbert was adding at this moment the huge *salpêtrière* of Paris and the colonnades of the Louvre. Ruthless death came to seize him in the midst of these occupations, so noble, useful and glorious.

The great Colbert, worn out with fatigue, watching and constraint, left the King, his wife, his children, his honours, his well-earned riches, and displayed no other anxiety than alarm as to his salvation—as though so many services rendered to the nation and to his Prince were no more, in his eyes, than vain works in relation to eternity.

Madame de Maintenon, having become a great lady, could not reasonably continue her office of governess to the King's children. M. Colbert, that

man of vigour, that Mount Atlas, capable of supporting all things without a plaint, had been charged with the care of the two new-born Princes.

Because of the third, Mademoiselle de Blois, and of the little Comte du Toulouse, I saw the minister frequently, and I was one of the first to remark the change in his face and his health.

During his last illness, I visited him more often. One day, of his own accord, he said to me:

"How do you get on with Madame de Maintenon? I have never heard her complain of you; but I make you this confidence, out of friendship. His Majesty complains of your attitude towards *your former friend.* If the frankness of your nature and the impatience of your humour have sometimes led you too far, I exhort you to moderate yourself, in your own interest and in that of your children. Madame de Maintenon is an amiable and witty person, whose society pleases the King. Have this consideration for a hard-working Prince, whom intellectual recreation relaxes and diverts, and make a third at those pleasant gatherings where you shone long before this lady, and where you would

never be her inferior. Go there, and frequently, instead of keeping at a distance in an attitude of resentment, which, do not doubt, is noticed and viewed unfavourably."

"But, monsieur," I answered M. Colbert, "you are not, then, aware that every time I am a third person at one of these interminable conversations, I always meet with some mark of disapproval, and sometimes with painful mortifications?"

"I have been told so," the sick man replied; "but I have also been told that you imprudently call down on yourself these outbursts of the King. What need have you to quarrel with Madame de Maintenon over a look, a word, a movement or a gesture? You seem to me persuaded that love enters into the King's friendship for the Marquise. Well, suppose you have guessed aright His Majesty's sentiments; will your dissatisfaction and your sarcasms prevent those sentiments from existing, and the Prince from indulging them?

"You know, madam, that he generally gets everything he wants, and M. de Montespan experienced that when he wished to set himself against your joint wills.

"I am nearer my end and my release than my doctors think. In leaving this whirlpool of disappointments, ambitions, errors, and mutual injustice, I should like to see you free, at peace, reconciled to your real interests, and out of reach, for ever, of the vicissitudes of fortune. In my eyes, your position is that of a ship-owner whom the ocean has constantly favoured, and who has reaped great riches. With moderation and prudence, it depended on himself to profit by his astonishing success, and at last to enjoy his life; but ambition and vain desire drive him afresh upon this sea, so fruitful in shipwrecks, and his last venture destroys all his prosperity and all his many labours.

"Our excellent Queen has gone to rest from her troubles and her journeys; and I, madam, am going to rest not long after her, having worn out my strength on great things that are as nothing."

The Marquis de Seignelay, eldest son of this minister, counted on succeeding to the principal offices of his father. He made a mistake. The place of secretary of state and controller-general passed to the President Pelletier, who had been

chosen by M. Colbert himself; and the superintendence of buildings, gardens and works went to swell the numerous functions of the Marquis de Louvois, who wished for and counted on it.

MM. de Blainville and Seignelay had good posts, proportioned to their capacity; the King never ceased to look upon them as[1] *the children of his dear M. Colbert.* Before his death, this minister saw his three daughters become duchesses. The King, who had been pleased to make these marriages, had given each of them a dowry of a million in cash.

As for the Abbé Colbert, already promoted to the Bishopric of Montpellier (to which three important abbeys were joined), he had the Archbishopric of Toulouse, with an immense revenue. It is true that he took a pleasure in rebuilding his archiepiscopal palace and cathedral out of a huge and ancient treasure, which he discovered whilst pulling down some old ruin to make a *salon.*

One might say that there was some force of

1 It must be remembered that the young Marquis de Seignelay was already Minister of Marine, an office which remained with him.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

attraction attached to this family and name of Colbert. Treasures arose from the earth to give themselves up and obey them.

CHAPTER XXXIII

MESDEMOISELLES DE MAZARIN—THE AGE OF PUBERTY—MADAME DE BEAUVAIS—ANGER OF THE QUEEN-MOTHER—THE CARDINAL'S POLICY—FIRST LOVE—LOUIS DE BEAUVAIS—THE ABBÉ DE ROHAN-SOUBISE—THE EMERALD'S *LYING-IN*—THE HANDSOME MUSKETEER—THE *COUNTERFEIT* OF THE KING.

At the time when the King, still very young, was submitting without impatience to the authority of the Queen his mother, and his god-father the Cardinal, his strength underwent a sudden development, and this lad became, all at once, a man. The numerous nieces of Cardinal Mazarin, who were particularly dear to the Queen, were as much at the Louvre as at their own home. Anne of Austria, naturally affable, gladly released them from the etiquette which was imposed upon everyone else. These young ladies played and laughed, sang or frolicked, after the manner of their years, and the young King lived frankly and gaily in their midst, as one lives with agreeable sisters, when one

is happy enough to have such. He lived fraternally with these pretty Italian girls, but his intimacy stopped there, since the Cardinal and the governess watched night and day over a young man who was greatly subject to surveillance.

At the same time, there was amongst the Queen's women a rather pretty waiting-maid, well brought up, who was called Madame de Beauvais. Those brunettes, with black eyes, bright complexions, and graceful plumpness, are almost always wanton and alluring. Madame de Beauvais noticed the sudden development of the Monarch, his impassioned reveries which betrayed themselves in his gaze. She thought she had detected intentions on his part, and an imperious need of explaining himself. A word, which was said to her in passing, authorised her, or seemed to authorise her, to make an almost intelligible reply. The young wooer showed himself less undecided, less enigmatic—and the understanding was completed.

Madame de Beauvais was the recipient of the Prince's first emotions, and the clandestine connection lasted for three months. Anne of Austria, informed of what was passing, wished at first to

punish her first maid-in-waiting; but the Cardinal, more circumspect, represented to her that this connexion, of which no one knew, was an occupation, not to say a safeguard, for the young King, whose fine constitution and health naturally drew him to the things of life. "Although eighteen years of age," he added, "the Prince abandons the whole authority to you; whereas another, in his place, would ardently dispute it. Do not let us quarrel with him about trifles, leave him his Beauvais lady, so that he may make no attempt on my pretty nieces nor on your authority, madam, nor on my important occupations, which are for the good of the State."

Anne of Austria, who was more a Christian and a mother than a diplomatic woman, found it very painful to appreciate these arguments of the Cardinal; but after some reflection she recognised their importance, and things remained as they were.

Madame de Beauvais had a son, whom the husband (whether over-confident or not) saw brought into the world with much delight, and whom, with a wealth of royalist respect, they baptised under the agreeable name of Louis. This

child, who had a fine figure and constitution, received a particularly careful education. He has something of the King about him, principally in his glance and smile. He presents, however, only the intellectual habit of his mother, and even a notable absence of grandeur and elevation. He is a very pretty waiting-woman, dressed out as a cavalier; in a word, he is that pliant and indefatigable courtier, whom we see everywhere, and whom town and Court greet by the name of *Baron de Beauvais.*

His sister is the Duchesse de Richelieu, true daughter of her father, as ugly, or rather, as lacking in charm, as he is; but replete with subtilty and intelligence, with that intelligence which perpetually suggests a humble origin, and which wearies or importunes, because of its ill-nature. At the age of seventeen, her freshness made her pass for being pretty. She accused the young Duc de Richelieu of having seduced her, and made her a mother; and he, in his fear of her indignation and intrigues, and of the reproaches of the Queen, hastened to confess his fault, and to repair everything by marrying her.

Baron Louis, her brother, to whom the King could hardly refuse anything, made her a lady-of-honour to the Dauphine. Madame de Richelieu delighted to spread a report in the world that I had procured her this office; she was deceived, and wished to be deceived. I had asked this eminent position for the Marquise de Thianges, in whom I was interested very differently. His Majesty decided that a Marquise was inferior to a Duchesse, even when that Duchesse was born a *de Beauvais*. Another son of the Monarch, well known at the Court as such, is M. l'Abbé de Rohan-Soubise, to whom the cardinal's hat is already promised. His figure, his carriage, his head, his attitude, his whole person infallibly reveal him; and the Prince de Soubise has so thoroughly recognised and understood the deceit, that he honours the young Churchman with all his indifference and his respect. He acts with him as a sort of guardian; and that is the limitation of his *rôle*.

The Princess de Soubise, who had resolved to advance her careless husband, either to the government of Brittany or to some ministry, persuaded herself that it is only by women that men can be

advanced; and that in order to advance a husband, it is necessary to advance oneself. Although a little thin, and lacking that of which the King is so fond, we saw in her a very pretty woman. She knew how to persuade His Majesty that she cherished for him the tenderest love. That is, I believe, the one trap that it is possible to set for him. He is credulous on that head; he was speedily caught. And every time that M. de Rohan was away, and there was freedom at the Hotel Soubise, the Princess came in person to Saint-Germain or to Versailles, to show her necklace and pendant of emeralds to the King. Such was the agreed signal.

The Abbé de Rohan was born of these emeralds. The King displays conscience in all his actions, except in his wars and conquests. When the little Soubise was grown up, His Majesty signified to the mother that this young man must enter the Church, not wishing to suffer the formation of a parasitical branch amongst the Rohans, which would have participated, without any right, in the legitimate sap. It is asserted that the Abbé de Rohan only submitted with infinite regret to a sentence which

neutralised him. The King has promised him all possible consideration; he has even embraced him tenderly, an action which is almost equivalent to a "declaration of degree" made to the Parliament.

The other child alleged to the King is that handsome musketeer, who is so like him. But, judging from the King's character, which respects, and in some fashion almost admires itself, in everything which proceeds from it, I do not venture to believe in this musketeer. The King wished one day to see him close by, and even accosted him by the orange-shubbery; but this movement seemed to me one of pure curiosity.

The resemblance, I must confess, is the most striking that I have yet seen; for it is complete, even to the tone of the voice. But a *look* might have operated this miracle. Instance the little negress, the daughter of the poor Queen, that Queen so timid and entirely natural, who, to her happiness, as much as to her glory, has never looked at, approached, or distinguished anyone except the King.

For the rest, we shall see and know well if the King does anything for his musketeer.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE YOUNG NOBILITY AND THE TURKS—PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE—THE UNLUCKY MINISTER AND THE PAGE OF STRASBURG—THE KING JUDGED AND DESCRIBED IN ALL THE DOCUMENTS—THE KING HUMILIATED IN HIS AFFECTIONS—SCANDAL AT COURT—GRIEF OF FATHERS AT HAVING GIVEN LIFE TO SUCH CHILDREN — WHY PRINCE EUGÈNE WAS NOT A BISHOP—WHY HE WAS NOT A COLONEL OF FRANCE—DEATH OF THE PRINCE DE CONTI.

As France was at peace at the moment when the three hundred thousand Turks swarmed over Hungary and threatened Vienna, our young princes and a fairly large number of nobles about the same age, took it into their heads to go and exhibit their bravery in Germany; they asked permission of M. de Louvois to join the Imperialists. This permission was granted to some amongst them, but refused to others. Those whom it was thought fit to restrain took no notice of the words of the minister, and departed as resolutely as though the

King had fallen asleep. They were arrested on the road; but His Majesty, having reflected on the matter, saw that these special prohibitions would do harm to the intentions which he had with regard to his deference for Germany, and they were all allowed to go their own way.

A little later, it was notified that there was a regular and active correspondence between these young people in Germany, and others who had remained in Paris or at the Court. The first minister had a certain page, one of the most agile, pursued; he was caught up with at Strasburg; his valise was seized. The Marquis de Louvois, desiring to give the King the pleasure of himself opening these mysterious letters, handed him the budget, the seals intact, and His Majesty thanked him for this attention. These thanks were the last that that powerful minister was destined to receive from his master; his star waned from that hour never again to recover its lustre, all his credit failed and crashed to the ground. This correspondence—spied on with so much zeal, surprised and carried off with such good fortune—informed the astonished Monarch that, in the

Louvois family, in his house and circle, his royal character, his manners, his affections, his tastes, his person, his whole life, were derisively censured. The beloved son-in-law of the minister, speaking with an open heart to his friends, who were travelling, and absent, represented the King to them as a sort of country-gentleman, given up now to the domestic and uniform life of the manor-house, more than ever devoted to his *dame bourgeoise*, and making love ecstatically at the feet of this young nymph of fifty seasons.

MM. de la Roche-Guyon and de Liancourt, sons of la Rochefoucauld, who expressed themselves with the same boldness, went so far as to say of their ruler that *he was but a stage and tinsel King*. The son-in-law of Louvois accused him of being most courageous in his gallery, but of turning pale on the eve, and at the moment, of an action; and d'Alincourt, son of Villeroi, carried his outrages further still. No one knows better than myself how unjust these accusations were, and are. I was sensible of the mortification such a reading must have caused to the most sensitive, the most irritable of Princes; but I rejoiced at the

humiliation that the lady-in-waiting felt for her share in this unpardonable correspondence. The annoyance that I read for some days on her handsome face consoled me, for the time being, for her great success at my expense.

Madame la Princesse de Conti, whom the King, up to this time, had not only cherished but adored, found also, in those documents, the term of her excessive favour. A letter from her to her husband said: "I have just given myself a maid-of-honour, wishing to spare Madame de Maintenon the trouble, *or the pleasure*, of giving me one herself."

She was summoned to Versailles, as she may very well have expected. The King, paying no attention to her tears, said to her: "I believed in your affection; I have done everything to deserve it; it is lamentable to me to be unable to count on it longer. Your cruel letter is in Madame de Maintenon's hands. She will let you read it again before committing it to the fire, and I beg you to inform her what is the harm she has done you."

"Madam," said Madame de Maintenon to

her, when she saw her before her, "when your amiable mother left this Court, where the slightest prosperity attracts envy, I promised her to take some care of your childhood, and I have kept my word. I have always treated you with gentleness and consideration; whence proceeds your hate against me of to-day? Is your young heart capable of it? I believed you to be a model of gratitude and goodness."

"Madam," replied the young Princess, weeping, "deign to pardon this imprudence of mine and to reconcile me with the King, whom I love so much."

"I have not the credit which you assume me to have," replied the lady-in-waiting coldly. "Unless for the extreme kindness of the King you would not be where you are, and you take it ill that I should be where I am! I have neither desired nor solicited the arduous rank that I occupy; I need resignation and obedience to support such a burden." Madame de Maintenon resumed her work. The Princess, not daring to interrupt her silence, made the bow that was expected of her and withdrew.

The Marquis de Louvois, when he read what his own son-in-law dared to write of the Monarch, grew pale and swooned away with grief. He cast himself several times before the feet of his master, asking now the punishment and now the pardon of a criminal and a madman.

"I believed myself to be loved by your family," cried the King. "What must I do, then, to be loved? And, great God! with what a set I am surrounded!"

All these things transpired. Soon we saw the father of the audacious Liancourt arrive like a man bereft of his wits. He ran to precipitate himself at the feet of the King.

"M. de la Rochefoucauld," said the Prince to him, "I was ignorant, until this day, that I was lacking in what is called *martial prowess;* but I shall at least have, on this occasion, the *courage* to despise the slanderous slights of these presumptuous youths. Do not talk to me of *the submissions and regrets* of your two sons, who are unworthy of you; let them live as far away from me as possible; they do not deserve to approach an honest man, such as their King."

The Prince de Turenne,[1] son of the Duc de Bouillon, and Prince Eugène of Savoy, third or fourth son of the Comtesse de Soissons (Olympe Mancini), had accompanied their cousins de Conti on this knightly expedition; all these gentlemen returned at the conclusion of the war; but Prince Eugène, a violent enemy of the King, did not come back.

This young Prince of the second branch, seeing his mother's disgrace since the great affair of the poison, hated me mortally. He carried his treachery so far as to attribute to me the misfortunes of Olympe, saying, and publishing all over Paris, that I had *incited* accusers in order to be able to deprive her forcibly of her superintendence. This post, which had been sold to me for four hundred thousand francs, had been paid for long since; that did not prevent Eugène from everywhere affirming the contrary.

Since the flight or exile of his lady mother, he had taken it into his head to dream of the

1 The Prince de Turenne was in bad odour at Court ever since he had separated monseigneur from his young wife by exaggerating that Princess's small failings.—MADAME DE MONTESPAN'S NOTE.

episcopate, and to solicit Père de la Chaise on the subject. But the King, who does not like frivolous or absurd figures in high offices, decided that a little man with a deformity would repel rather than attract deference at a pinnacle of dignity of the priesthood.

Refused for the episcopate, M. de Soissons thought he might offer himself as a colonel. His Majesty, who did not know the military ways of this abbé, refused him anew, both as an abbé and as a hunchback, and as a public libertine already degraded by his irregularities.

From all these refusals and mortifications there sprung his firm resolve to quit France. He had been born there; he left all his family there except his mother; he declared himself its undying enemy, and said publicly in Germany *that Louis XIV. would shed tears of blood for the injury and the affront which he had offered him.*

MM. de Conti, after the events in Hungary and at Vienna, returned to France covered with laurels. They came to salute the King at Versailles. His Majesty gave them neither a good nor a bad reception. The Princes left the same day

for Chantilly, where M. de Condé, their paternal uncle, tried to curb their too romantic imaginations and guaranteed their good behaviour in the future.

This life, sedentary or spent in hunting, began to weary them, when overruling Providence was pleased to send them a diversion of the highest importance. M. le Prince de Conti was seized suddenly with that burning fever which announces the small-pox. Every imaginable care was useless; he died of it and bequeathed, in spite of himself, a most premature and afflicting widowhood to his young and charming spouse, who was not, till long afterwards, let into the secret of his scandalous excesses.

M. de la Roche-sur-Yon, his only brother, was as distressed at his death as though he had nothing to gain by it; he took immediately the name of Conti, and doffed the other, which he had hitherto borne as a borrowed title. The domain and county of La Roche-sur-Yon belongs to the great Mademoiselle. She had been asked to make this condescension when the young Prince was born. She agreed with a good grace, for the child, born prematurely, did not seem likely to live and survive.

CHAPTER XXXV

NINON AT COURT — THE KING BEHIND THE GLASS— ANXIETY OF THE MARQUISE ON THE SUBJECT OF THIS INTERVIEW—VISIT TO MADAME DE MAINTENON—HER REPLY AND HER AMBIGUOUS PROMISE.

MADEMOISELLE DE LENCLOS is universally known in the world for the agreeableness of her superior wit and her charms of face and person. When Madame de Maintenon, after the loss of her father, arrived from Martinique, she had occasion to make her acquaintance; and it seems that it was Ninon who, seeing her debating between the offers of M. Scarron and the cloister, succeeded in persuading her to marry the rich poet, though he was a cripple, rather than to bury herself, so young, in a convent of Ursulines or Bernardines, even were the convent in Paris.

At the death of the poet Scarron (who, when he married and when he died, possessed only a life annuity), Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, once more in

poverty, found in Mademoiselle de Lenclos a generous and persevering friend, who at once offered her her house and table. Mademoiselle d'Aubigné passed eight or ten months in the intimate society of this philosophical woman. But her conscience, or her prudery, not permitting her to tolerate longer a manner of life in which she seemed to detect license, she quitted Ninon, advising her to renounce coquetry, whilst the other was advising her to abandon herself to it.

There, where Madame Scarron found the tone of good society with wit, she looked upon herself as in her proper sphere, as long as no open scandal was brought to her notice. She consented still to remain her friend; but the fear of passing for an approver or an accomplice prevented her from remaining if there were any publicity. It was not exactly through her scruples, it was through her vanity. I have had proof of this on various occasions, and I have made no error.

The pretended amours of Mademoiselle d'Aubigné and the Marquis de Villarceaux, Ninon's friend, are an invention of malicious envy. I justified Madame

Scarron on the matter before the King, when I asked her for the education of the Princes; and having rendered her this justice, from conviction rather than necessity, I shall certainly not charge her with it to-day. Madame de Maintenon possesses a fund of philosophy which she does not reveal nor confess to everybody. She fears God in the manner of Socrates and Plato; and as I have seen her more than once make game, with infinite wit, of the Abbé Gobelin, her confessor, who is a pedant and avaricious, I am persuaded that she knows much more about it than all these proud doctors in theology, and that she would be thoroughly capable of confessing her confessor.

She had remained, then, the friend of Ninon, but at heart and in recollection, without sending her news or seeing her again. Mademoiselle de Lenclos, rich, disinterested, and proud of her independent position, learned with pleasure the triumph of her former friend, but without writing to her or congratulating her. Ninon, by the consent of all those who have come near her, is good-nature itself. One of her relations, or friends, was a candidate for a vacant post as farmer-general, and

besought her to make some useful efforts for him.

"*I have no one but Madame de Maintenon,*" she replied to this relation. And the other said to her: "*Madame de Maintenon? It is as though you had the King himself!*"

Mademoiselle de Lenclos, trimming her pen with her trusty knife, wrote to the lady-in-waiting an agreeable and polished letter, one of those letters, careful without stiffness, that one writes, indulging oneself a little with the intention of getting oneself read.

The letter of solicitation seemed so pretty to the lady-in-waiting that she made the King peruse it.

"This is an excellent opportunity for me," said the Prince at once, "to see with my own eyes this extraordinary person of whom I have so long heard talk. I saw her one day at the opera, but just when she was getting into her carriage; and my *incognito* did not permit me to approach her. She seemed to me small, but well made. Her carriage drove off like a flash."

To meet this curiosity which the King displayed, it was agreed that Madame de Maintenon, on the pretext of having a better consultation,

should summon Mademoiselle de Lenclos to Versailles, and that in one of the alcoves of the chapel she should be given a place which would put her almost in front of His Majesty.

She arrived some minutes before Mass. Madame de Maintenon received her with marked attention, mingled with reserve, promised her support with the ministers when the affair should be discussed, and made her promise to pass the entire day at Versailles, for the King was obliged to visit the new gardens at Marly.

The time for Mass being come, Madame de Maintenon said to the fair Epicurean, with a smile: "You are one of us, are you not? The music will be delicious in the chapel to-day, you will not have a moment of weariness."

Ninon, meeting this slight reproach with a smile of propriety, replied that she adored and respected everything which the Monarch respected.

During the service, the King, tranquilly secluded in his golden box, could see and examine the lady at his leisure, without compromising himself or embarrassing her by his gaze. As for her, her decent and quite appropriate attitude merited

for her the approval of her old friend, of the King, and of the most critical eyes.

The Monarch, in effect, departed, not for the Château of Marly, but for Trianon; and hardly had he reached there before, in a little, very close carriage, he was brought back to Versailles. He went up to Madame de Maintenon's apartments by the little staircase in the Prince's Court, and stole into the glass closet without being observed, except by a solitary lackey.

The ladies, believing themselves to be alone and at liberty, talked without ceremony or constraint, as though they had been but twenty years old. The King was very much grieved at the things which were said, but he heard, without losing a word, the following dialogue or interview:

NINON DE LENCLOS.—It is not my preservation which should surprise you, since from morning to night I breathe that voluptuous air of independence which refreshes the blood, and puts in play its circulation. I am morally the same person whom you came to see in the pretty little house in the Rue de Tournelles. My dressing-gown, as you well know, was my preferred and chosen garb.

To-day, as then, Madame la Marquise, I should choose to place on my escutcheon the Latin device of the towns of San Marino and Lucca—*Libertas.* You have complimented me on my beauty, I congratulate you upon yours, and I am surprised that you have so kept and preserved it in the midst of the constraints and servitude that grandeur and greatness involve.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—At the commencement, I argued as you argue, and believed that I should never get to the year's end without disgust. Little by little I imposed silence upon my emotions and my regrets. A life of great activity and occupation, by separating us, as it were, from ourselves, extinguishes those exacting niceties, both of our proper sensibility, and of our self-conceit. I remembered my sufferings, my fears and my privations after the death of that poor man[1]; and since labour has been the yoke imposed by God on every human being, I submitted with a good grace to the respectable labour of education. Few teachers are attached to their pupils; I attached myself to mine with

1 It was so that she commonly spoke of her husband, Scarron.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

tenderness, with delight. It is true that it was my privilege to find the King's children amiable and pretty, as few children are.

NINON DE LENCLOS.—From the most handsome and amiable man in the world there could not come mediocre offspring. M. du Maine is your idol; the King has given him his noble bearing, with his intelligence; and you have innoculated him with your wit. Is it true that Madame de Montespan is no longer your friend? That is a rumour which has credit in the capital; and if the thing is true I regret it, and am sorry for you.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—Madame de Montespan, as all Paris knows, obtained my pension for me after the death of the Queen-mother. This service, comparable with a favour, will always remain in my heart and my memory. I have thanked her a thousand times for it, and I always shall thank her for it. At the time when the young Queen of Portugal charged herself with my fate and fortune, the Marquise, who had known me at the Hôtel d'Albret, desired to retain me in France, where she destined for me the children of the King. I did what she desired; I took

charge of his numerous children out of respect for my benefactor, and attachment to herself. To-day, when their first education is completed, and His Majesty has recompensed me with the gift of the Maintenon estate, the Marquise pretends that my *rôle* is finished, that I was wrong to let myself be made lady-in-waiting, and that the recognition due to her imposes an obligation on me to obey her in everything, and withdraw from this neighbourhood.

NINON DE LENCLOS.—Absolutely?

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—Yes, really, I assure you.

NINON DE LENCLOS.—A departure? An absolute retreat? Oh, it is too much! Does she wish you, then, to resign your office?

MADAME DE MAINTENON.—I cannot but think so, mademoiselle.

NINON DE LENCLOS.—Speaking personally, and for my private satisfaction, I should be enchanted to see you quit the Court and return to society. Society is your element. You know it by heart; you have shone there, and there you would shine again. By reappearing, you would see yourself

instantly surrounded by those delicate and (pardon me the expression) sensuous minds who applauded with such delight your agreeable stories, your brilliant and solid conversation. Those pleasant, idle hours were lost to us when you left us, and I shall always remember them. At the Court, where etiquette selects our words, as it rules our attitudes, you cannot be yourself; I must confess that frankly. You do not paint your lovely face, and I am obliged to you for that, madam; but it is impossible for you to refrain from somewhat colouring your discourse, not with the King, perhaps, whose always calm gaze transparently reveals the man of honour; but with those eminences, those grandeurs, those royal and serene highnesses, whose artificial and factitious perfumes already filled your chapel before the incense of the sacrifice had wreathed its clouds round the high altar.

The King, suddenly showing himself, somewhat to the surprise of the ladies, said:—"I have long wished, mademoiselle, this unique and agreeable opportunity for which I am indebted to Madame de Maintenon. Be seated, I pray you, and permit *My Highness*, slightly perfumed though I be, to

enjoy for a moment your witty conversation and society. What! The atmosphere does not meet with your approval, and, in order to have madame's society, you desire to disgust her with it herself, and deprive us of her?"

"Sire," answered Ninon, "I have not enough power or authority to render my intentions formidable, and my long regrets will be excused, I hope, since, if madame left Versailles, she would cause the same grief there that she has caused us."

"One has one's detractors in every conceivable locality. If Madame de Maintenon has met with one at Versailles she would not be exempt from them anywhere else. At Paris, you would be without rampart or armour, I like to believe: but deign to grant me this preference, I can very well protect my friends. I think the town is ill-informed, and that Madame de Montespan has no interest in separating madame from her children, who are also mine. You will greatly oblige me, mademoiselle, if you will adopt this opinion and publish it in your society, which is always select, though it is so numerous."

Then the King, passing to other subjects, brought up, of his own accord, the place of farmer-general, which happened to be vacant; and he said to Mademoiselle de Lenclos: "I promise you this favour with pleasure, the first which you have ever solicited of me, and I must beg you to address yourself to Madame de Maintenon on every occasion when your relations or yourself have something to ask from me. You must see well, mademoiselle, that it is well to leave madame, in this place, as an agent with me for you, and your particular ambassadress."

I learnt all these curious details five or six days later from a young colonel, related to me, to whom Mademoiselle de Lenclos narrated her admission and interview at Versailles. In reproducing the whole of this scene, I have not altered the sense of a word; I have only sought to make up for the charm which every conversation loses that is reported by a third party who was not actually an eye-witness.

This confidence informed me that prejudices were springing up against me in the mind of the favourite. I went to see her, as though my visit

were an ordinary one, and asked her what one was to think of Ninon's interview with the King.

"Yes," she said, "His Majesty has for a long time past had a great desire to see her, as a person of much wit, and of whom he has heard people speak since his youth. He imagined her to have larger eyes, and something a little more virile in her physiognomy. He was greatly, and I must say, agreeably surprised, to find that he had been deceived. 'One can see eyes of far greater size,' His Majesty told me; 'but not more brilliant, more animated or amiable. Her mouth, admirably moulded, is almost as small as Madame de Montespan's. Her pretty, almost round face has something Georgian about it, unless I am mistaken. She says, and lets you understand, everything she likes; she awaits your replies without interruption: her contradictions preserve urbanity; she is respectful without servility; her pleasant voice, although not of silver, is none the less the voice of a nymph. In conclusion, I am charmed with her.'"

"Does she believe me hostile to your prosperity, my dear Marquise?" I said at once to Madame de Maintenon, who seemed slightly confused, and

answered: "Mademoiselle de Lenclos is not personally of that opinion; she has heard certain remarks to that effect in the *salons* of the town; and I have given her my most explicit assurance that, if you should ever cease to care for me, my inclination and my gratitude would be none the less yours, madam, so long as I should live."

"You owe me those sentiments," I resumed, with a trifle too much fire; "I have a right to count on them. But it is most painful to me, I confess, after having given all my youth to the King, to see him now cool down, even in his courtesy. The hours which he used to pass with me he gives to you, and it is impossible that this innovation should not seem startling here, since all Paris is informed of it, and Mademoiselle de Lenclos has discussed it with you."

"I owe everything that I am to the goodness of the King," she answered me. "Would you have me, when he comes to me, bid him go elsewhere, to you or somebody else, it matters not?"

"No, but I should be glad if your countenance did not, at such a moment, expand like a sunflower; I should like you, at the risk of somewhat

belying yourself, to have the strength to moderate and restrain that vein of talk and conversation of which you have given yourself the supremacy and monopoly; I wish you had the generosity to show, now and again, less wit. This sort of *régime* and abstinence would not destroy you off-hand, and the worst that could result to you from it, would be to pass in his eyes for a woman of a variable and intermittent wit; what a great calamity!"

"Ah, madam, what is it you suggest!" the lady-in-waiting replied to me, almost taking offence. "I have never been eccentric or singular with anyone in the world, and you want me to begin with my King! It cannot be, I assure you! Suggest to me reasonable and possible things, and I will enter into all your views with all my heart and without hesitation."

This reply shocked me to the point of irritation.

"I believed you long to be a simple and disinterested soul," I said to her, "and it was in this belief that I gave you my cordial affection. Now I read your heart, and all your projects are revealed to me. You are not only greedy of respect and consideration, you are ambitious to the point of

madness. The King's widowhood has awakened all your wild dreams; you confided to me fifteen years ago that the soothsayer of the Maréchale d'Albret had predicted for you a sceptre and a crown."

At these words, the governess made me a sign to lower my voice, and said to me, with an accent of candour and good faith which it is impossible for me to forget: "I confided to you at the time that puerility of society, just as the Maréchale and the Maréchal (without believing it) related it to all France. But this prognostication need not alarm you, madam," she added; "a King like ours is incapable of such an extravagance, and if he were to determine on it, it would not have my countenance nor approval.

"I do not think that thus far I have passed due limits; the granddaughter of a great noble, of a first-gentleman of the chamber, I have been able to become a lady-in-waiting without offending the eyes; but the lady-in-waiting *will never be Queen*, and I give you my permission to insult me publicly *when I am.*"

Such was this conversation, to which I have not added a word. We shall see soon how Madame

de Maintenon kept her word to me, and if I am not right in owing her a grudge for this promise with a double meaning, with which it was her caprice to decoy me by her shuffling.

CHAPTER XXXVI

BIRTH OF THE DUC D'ANJOU — THE PRESENT TO THE MOTHER—THE CASKET OF PATIENCE—DEPARTURE OF THE KING FOR THE ARMY—THE KING TURNS A DEAF EAR—HOW THAT CONCERNS MADAME DE MAINTENON—THE PRISONER OF THE BASTILLE—THE DANGER OF CARICATURES—THE ADMINISTRATIVE THERMOMETER—ACTORS WHO CAN NEITHER BE APPLAUDED NOR HISSED—RELAPSE OF THE PRISONER—SCARRON'S WILL—A FINE SUBJECT FOR ENGRAVING—MADAME DE MAINTENON'S OPINION UPON THE JESUITS—THE AUDIENCE OF THE GREEN *SALON*—PORTIONS FROM THE REFECTORY—MADAME DE MAINTENON'S PRESENCE OF MIND—I WILL MAKE YOU SCHOOLMASTER.

MADAME LA DAUPHINE, greatly pleased with her new position, in that she represented the person of the Queen, had already given birth to M. le Duc de Bourgogne; she now brought into the world a second son, who was at once entitled Duc d'Anjou. The King, to thank her for this gift, made her a present of an oriental casket, which could only be opened by a secret spring,

and that not before one had essayed it for half-an-hour. Madame la Dauphine found in it a superb set of pearls and four thousand new louis d'or. As she had no generosity in her heart, she bestowed no bounties on her *entourage*. The King this year made an expedition to Flanders. Before getting into his carriage he came and passed half-an-hour or forty minutes with me, and asked me if I should not go and pass the time of his absence at Petit-Bourg.

"At Petit-Bourg and at Bourbon," I answered, "unless you allow me to accompany you." He feigned not to have heard me, and said: "Lauzun, who, eleven or twelve years ago, refused the bâton of a Marshal of France, asks to accompany me into Flanders as aide-de-camp. Purge his mind of such ideas, and give him to understand that his part is played out with me."

"What business is it of mine," I asked with vivacity, "to teach M. de Lauzun how to behave? Let Madame de Maintenon charge herself with these homilies; she is in office, and I am there no longer."

These words troubled the King; he said to me:

"You will do well to go to Bourbon until my return from Flanders."

He left on the following day, and the same day I took my departure. I went to spend a week at my little convent of Saint-Joseph, where the ladies, who thought I was still in favour, received me with marks of attention and their accustomed respect. On the third day, the Prioress, announcing herself by my second waiting-woman, came to present me with a kind of petition or prayer, which, I confess, surprised me greatly, as I had never commissioned anyone to practise severity in my name.

A man, detained at the Bastille for the last twelve years, implored me in this document to have compassion on his sufferings, and to give orders which would strike off his chains and irons.

"My intention," he said, "was not, madam, to offend or harm you. Artists are somewhat feather-headed, and I was then only twenty." This petition was signed "Hathelin, prisoner of State." I had my horses put in my carriage at once, and betook myself to the Château of the Bastille, the governor of which I knew.

When I set foot in this formidable fortress, in spite of myself I experienced a thrill of terror.

The attentions of public men are a thermometer, which, instead of our own notions, is very capable of letting us know the just degree of our favour. The Governor of the Bastille, some months before, would have saluted me with his artillery; perhaps he still received me with a certain ceremony, but without putting any ardour into his politeness, or drawing too much upon himself. In such circumstances one must see without regarding these insults of meanness, and, by a contrivance of distraction, escape from vile affronts.

The object of my expedition being explained, the Governor found on his register that poor Hathelin, aged thirty-two to thirty-four years, was an engraver by profession. The lieutenant-general of police had arrested him long ago for a comic or satirical engraving on the subject of M. le Marquis de Montespan and the King.

I desired to see Hathelin, quite determined to ask his pardon for all his sufferings, with which I was going to occupy myself exclusively until I

was successful. The Governor, a man all formality and pride, told me that he had not the necessary authority for this communication; I was obliged to return to my carriage without having tranquillised my poor captive.

The same evening I called upon the lieutenant-general of police, and after having eloquently pleaded the cause of this forgotten young man, I discovered that there was no *lettre de cachet* to his prejudice, and procured his liberation.

He came to pay his respects and thanks to me, in my parlour at Saint-Joseph, on the very day of his liberation. He seemed to me much younger than his age, which astonished me greatly after his misfortunes. I gave him six thousand francs, in order to indemnify him slightly for that horrible Bastille. At first he hesitated to take them.

"Let your captivity be a lesson to you," I said to him; "the affairs of kings do not concern us. When such actors occupy the scene, it is permissible neither to applaud nor to hiss."

Hathelin promised me *to be good*, and for the future to concern himself only with his graver and

his private business. He wished me a thousand good wishes, with an expansion of heart which caused his tears and mine to flow. But artists are not made like other men; he, for all his good heart, was gifted with one of those ardent imaginations which make themselves critics and judges of notable personages, and, above all, of favourites of fortune. Barely five or six months had elapsed when Hathelin published a new satirical plate, in which Madame de Maintenon was represented as weeping, or pretending to weep, over the sick-bed of M. Scarron. The dying man was holding an open will in his hand, in which one could read these words: "*I leave you my permission to marry again—a rich and serious man—more so than I am.*"

The print had already been widely distributed when the engraver and his plate were seized. This time Hathelin had not the honour of the Bastille; he was sent to some dépôt. And although his action was absolutely fresh and unknown to me, all Paris was convinced that I had inspired his unfortunate talent. Madame de Maintenon was convinced of it, and believes it still.

The King has done me the honour to assure me lately that he had banished the idea from his mind; but he was so persuaded of it at first that he could not pardon me for *so black an intrigue*, and, but for the fear of scandal, would have hanged the engraver, Hathelin, in order to provide my gentlemen, the engravers, with a subject for a fine plate.

About the same time, the Jesuits caused Madame de Maintenon a much more acute pain than that of the ridiculous print. She endured this blow with her accustomed courage; nevertheless, she conceived such a profound aversion to the leaders of this ever-restless company, that she has never been seen in their churches, and was at the greatest pains to rob them of the interior of Saint-Cyr. "They are men of intrigue," she said to Madame de Montchevreuil, her friend and confidante. "The name of Jesus is always in their mouths, He is in their solemn device, they have taken Him for their banner and namesake; but His candour, His humility are unknown to them. They would like to order everything that exists, and rule even in the palaces of kings. Since they have the privilege

and honour of confessing our Monarch, they wish to impose the same bondage upon me. Heaven preserve me from it! I do not want rectors of colleges and professors to direct my unimportant conscience. I like a confessor who lets you speak, and not those who put words into your mouth."

With the intention of mortifying her and then of being able to publish the adventure, they charged one of their instruments to seek her out at Versailles in order to ask an audience of her, not as a Jesuit, but as a plain churchman fallen upon adversity.

The petition of this man having been admitted, he received a printed form which authorised him *to appear before Madame at her time of good works*, for she had her regular hours for everything. He was introduced into the great green *salon*, which was destined, as one knows, for this kind of audience. There were many people present, and before all this company this old fox thus unfolded himself:

"Madam, I bless the Sovereign Dispenser of all things for what He has done for you; you have merited His protection from your tenderest youth. When, after your return from Martinique, you

came to dwell in the little town of Niort, with your lady mother, I saw you often in our Jesuit church, which was at two paces from your house. Your modesty, your youth, your respectful tenderness towards Madame la Baronne d'Aubigné, your excellent mother, attracted the attention of our community, who saw you every day in the temple with a fresh pleasure, as you can well imagine. Madame la Baronne died; and we learnt that those tremendous lawsuits with the family not having been completed before her death, she left you, you and M. Charles, your brother, in the most frightful poverty. At that news, our fathers (who are so charitable, so compassionate) ordered me to reserve every day, for the two young orphans, two large portions from the refectory, and to bring them to you myself in your little lodging.

"To-day, being no longer, owing to my health, in the congregation of the Jesuit Fathers, I should be glad to obtain a place conformable with my ancient occupations. My good angel has inspired me with the thought, madam, to come and solicit your powerful protection and your good graces."

Madame de Maintenon, having sustained this

attack with fortitude, and it was not without vigour, replied to the petitioner: "I have had the honour of relating to His Majesty, not so very long ago, the painful and afflicting circumstance which you have just recalled to me. Your companions, *for one fortnight*, were at the pains to send to my little brother and to me a portion of their food. Our relations, who enjoyed all our property, had reduced us to indigence. But, as soon as my position was ameliorated, I sent *fifteen hundred francs* to the Reverend Father Superior of the Jesuits for his *charities*. That manner of reimbursement has not acquitted me, and I could not see an unfortunate man begging me for assistance without remembering what your house once did for me. I do not remember your face, monsieur, but I believe your simple assertion. If you are in Holy Orders I will recommend you to the Archbishop of Rouen, who will find you a place suitable for you. Are you in Holy Orders?"

"No, madam," replied the ex-Jesuit; "I was merely a lay-brother."

"In that case," replied the Marquise, "we can offer you a position as schoolmaster; and the

Jesuit Fathers, if they have any esteem for you, should have rendered you this service, for they have the power to do that, and more."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE KING TAKES LUXEMBOURG BECAUSE *IT IS HIS WILL* —DEVASTATION OF THE ELECTORATE OF TRÈVES— THE MARQUIS DE LOUVOIS — HIS PORTRAIT — THE MARVELS WHICH HE WORKED — THE LE TELLIER AND THE MORTEMART — THE KING DESTINES MADEMOISELLE DE LOUVOIS TO A COLBERT—HOW ONE MANAGES NOT TO BOW—THE DRAGONADES—A NECESSARY MAN — MONEY MAKES FAT — MEUDON — THE HOROSCOPE.

THIS journey to Flanders did not keep the King long away from his capital. And, withal, he made two fine and rich conquests, short as the space of time was. The important town of Luxembourg was necessary to him. He wanted it. The Maréchal de Créqui invested this place with an army of thirty thousand men, and made himself master of it at the end of a week.

Immediately after the King marched to the Electorate of Trèves, which had belonged, he said, to the former kingdom of Austrasia. He

had no trouble in mastering it, almost all the imperial forces being in Hungary, Austria, and in those cantons where the Ottomans had called for them. The town of Trèves humbly recognised the King of France as its lord and suzerain. Its fine fortifications were levelled at once, and our victories were, unhappily, responsible for the firing, pillage and devastation of almost the whole Electorate. For the Duke of Créqui, faithful executor of the orders of Louvois, imagined that a sovereign is only obeyed when he proves himself stern and inflexible.

In the first years of my favour, the Marquis de Louvois enjoyed my entire confidence, and, I must admit, my highest esteem. Independently of his manners, which are, when he wishes, those of the utmost amiability, I remarked in him an industrious and indefatigable minister, an intelligent man, as well instructed in the mass as in details; a mind fertile in resources, means and expedients; an administrator, a jurist, a theologian, a man of letters and of affairs, an artist, an agriculturist, a soldier.

Loving pleasure, yet knowing how to despise

it in favour of the needs of the State and the care of affairs, this minister concentrated in his own person all the other ministries, which only moved by his impulse and guiding hand.

Did the King, followed by his whole Court, arrive in fearful weather by the side of some vast and swollen river, M. de Louvois, alighting from his carriage, would sweep the horizon with a single glance. He would designate on the spot the farms, granaries, mills, and châteaux necessary to the passage of a fastidious king on his travels. A general repast, appropriate and sufficient, issued at his voice as it had been from the bowels of the earth. An abundance of mattresses received provisionally the more or less delicate forms, stretched out in slumber or fatigue. And in the depth of the night, by the light of a thousand flaring torches, a vast bridge, constructed hastily, in spite of wind and rain, permitted the royal carriage and the host of other vehicles to cross the stream, and find on the further bank succulent dishes and voluptuous apartments.

This prodigious energy, which created results by pulverising obstacles, had rendered the minister

not only agreeable but precious to a young Sovereign who, unable to tolerate delays and resistance, desired in all things to attain and succeed. The King, without looking too closely at the means, loved the results which were the consequences of such a genius, and he rewarded with a limitless confidence the intrepid and often culpable zeal of a minister who procured him hatred.

When the passions of the Conqueror, owing to success, grew calm, he studied more tranquilly both his own desires and his coadjutor's. The King by nature is neither inhuman nor savage, and he knew that Louvois was like Phalaris in these points. Then he was at as much pains to repress this unpopular humour as he had shown indifference before in allowing it to act.

The Marquis de Louvois (who did not like me) had lavished his incense upon me, in order that some fumes of it might float up to the Prince. He saw me beloved and, as it were, almost omnipotent; he sought my alliance with ardour. The family of le Tellier is good enough for a judicial and legal family; but what bonds are there between the Louvois and the Mortemart? No matter:

ambition puts a thick bandage over the eyes of those whom it inspires; the Marquis wished to marry his daughter to my nephew, De Mortemart!!!

I communicated this proposition to the King. His Majesty said to me: "I am delighted that he has committed the grave fault of approaching anyone else than me about this marriage. Answer him, if you please, that it is my province alone to marry the daughters, and even the sons of my ministers. Louvois has thus far helped me to spend enormous sums. M. Colbert has assisted me to heap up treasure. It is for one of the Colberts that I destine your nephew; for I have made up my mind that the three sisters shall be Duchesses."

In effect, His Majesty caused this marriage; and the Marquis de Louvois had the jaundice over it for more than a fortnight.

Since that time his assiduities have been enlightened. He puts respect into his reverences; and when our two coachmen carried our equipages past each other on the same road, he read some documents in order to avoid saluting me.

In the affair of the Protestants, he caused

what was at first only anxiety, religious zeal and distrust to turn into rebellion. In order to make himself necessary, he proposed his universal and permanent patrols and dragoons. He caused certain excesses to be committed in order to raise a cry of disorder; and a measure which could have been effective without ceasing to be paternal, became, in his hands, an instrument of dire persecution.

Madame de Maintenon, having learnt that Louvois, to exonerate himself, was secretly designating her as the real author of these rigorous and lamentable counsels, made complaint of it to the King, and publicly censured his own brother, who, in order to make himself agreeable to the Jesuits, to Bossuet, and to Louvois, had made himself a little hero in his provincial government.

The great talents of M. de Louvois, and the difficulty of replacing him, became his refuge and safeguard. But, from the moment that he no longer received the intimate confidence of the King, and the esteem of the lady-in-waiting, who sits upon the steps of the throne, he can only look upon himself at Versailles as a traveller with board and lodging.

His revenues are incalculable. The people, seeing his enormous corpulence, maintain, or pretend, that he is *stuffed with gold*. His general administration of posts alone is worth a million. His other offices are in proportion.

His château of Meudon-Fleury, a magical and quite ideal site, is the finest pleasure-house that ever yet the sun shone on. The park and the gardens are in the form of an amphitheatre, and are, in my opinion, sublime, in a far different way from those of Vaux. M. Fouquet, condemned to death, in punishment for his superb château, died slowly in prison; the Marquis de Louvois will not, perhaps, die in a stronghold; but his horoscope has already warned that minister to be prepared for some great adversity. He knows it; sometimes he is concerned about it; and everything leads one to believe that he will come to a bad end. He has done more harm than people believe.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE REFORMED RELIGION AND PAINTING ON ENAMEL—PETITOT AND HELIOGABALUS—THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION WITH THE MARQUISE—THE KING'S INTERVENTION—LOUIS XIV. RENDERS HIS ACCOUNT TO THE CHRISTIAN AND MOST CHRISTIAN PAINTER—THE KING'S WORD IS NOT TO BE RESISTED—REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

AT the moment when the first edicts were issued against the public exercise of the *Reformed Religion*, the famous and incomparable Petitot, refusing all the supplications of France and of Europe, executed for me in my château of Clagny, five infinitely precious portraits, upon which it was his caprice only to work alternately, and which still demanded from him a very great number of sittings. One of these five portraits was that of the King, copied from that great and magnificent picture of Mignard, where he was represented at the age of twenty, in the costume of a Greek hero, in all the lustre of his youth. His Majesty had given me this little com-

mission for more than a year, and I desired, with all my heart, to be able soon to fulfil his expectation. He destined this miniature for the Emperor of China or the Sultan.

I went to see M. Petitot at Clagny. When he saw me he came to me with a wrathful air, and, presenting me his unfinished enamel, he said to me: "Here, madam, is your Greek hero; his new edicts finish us, but, as for me, I shall not finish him. With the best intentions in the world, and all the respect that is due to him, my just resentment would pass into my brush; I should give him the traits of Heliogabalus, which would probably not delight him."

"Do you think so, monsieur?" said I to my artist. "Is it thus you speak of the King, our master; of a King who has affection for you, and has proved it to you so many times?"

"My memory recalls to me all that his munificence has done for my talent in a thousand instances," went on the painter; "but his edicts, his cruel decrees, have upset my heart, and the persecutor of the *true Christians* no longer merits my consideration or good-will."

I had been ignorant hitherto of the faith which this able man professed; he informed me that he worshipped God in another fashion than ours, and made common cause with the *Protestants*.

"Well," said I to him then, "what have you to complain of in the new edicts and decrees? They only concern, so far, your ministers—I should say, your priests; you are not one, and are never likely to be; what do these new orders of the council matter to you?"

"Madam," resumed Petitot, "our ministers, by preaching the holy Gospel, fulfil the first of their duties. The King forbids them to preach; then, he persecutes them and us. In the thousand and one religions which exist the cause of the priests and the sanctuary becomes the cause of the faithful. Our priests are not imbecile Trappists and Carthusians, to be reduced to inaction and silence. Since their tongues are tied, they are resolved to depart; and their departure becomes an exile which it is our duty to share. If you will entrust me with your portraits which have been commenced, with the exception of that of *Heliogabalus*, I will finish them in a hospitable land, and shall have the honour

of sending them to you, already fired and in all their perfection." [1]

Petitot, until this political crisis, had only exhibited himself to me beneath an appearance of simplicity and good-nature. Now his whole face was convulsed and almost threatening; when I looked at him he made me afraid. I did not amuse myself by discussing with him matters upon which we were, both of us, more or less ignorant. I did all that could be done to introduce a little calm into his superstitious head, and to gain the necessary time for the completion of my five portraits. I was careful not to confide to the King this qualification of *Heliogabalus;* but as his intervention was absolutely necessary to me, I persuaded him to come and spend half-an-hour at this château of Clagny, which he had deserted for a long time past.

"Your presence," I said to him, "will perhaps take the edge off the theological irritation of your fanatical painter. A little royal amenity, a little

1 Genuine Petitots have become very rare. These enamels, of a finish and expression which is surprising, sell for as much as six and twelve thousand francs.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

conversation and blandishment, *à la Louis XIV.*, will seduce his artistic vanity. At the cost of that your portrait, Sire, will be terminated. It would not be without."

The surprise of His Majesty was extreme when he had to learn and comprehend that the prodigious talent of Petitot was joined to a Huguenot conscience, and this talent spoke of expatriating itself. "*I will go to Clagny to-morrow*," replied the Prince to me; and he went there, in fact, accompanied by the Marquise de Montchevreuil and Madame la Dauphine, in an elaborate *négligé*.

"Good-day, M. Petitot," said the Monarch to our artist, who rose on seeing him enter. "I come to contemplate your new masterpieces. Is my little miniature near completion?"

"Sire," replied Petitot, "it will not be for another six weeks. All these affairs and decrees have deprived me of many hours; my heart is heavy over it."

"And why do you busy yourself with these discussions, with which your great talent has no concern?" said the King to him, gently.

"Sire, it is my religion that is more concerned

than ever. I am a Christian, and my law is dear to me."

"And I am *Most Christian*," answered His Majesty, smiling. "I profess the religion, I keep the law that your ancestors and mine kept before the Reformation."

"Sire, this *reform* has been adopted by a great number of monarchs—a proof that the Reformation is not the enemy of kings, as is said."

"Yes, in the case of wise and honest men like yourself, my good friend Petitot; but just as all your *brothers* have not your talents, so they have not your rectitude and loyalty, which are known to me."

"Sire, Your Majesty overwhelms me; but I beg him to be persuaded that my brothers have been calumniated."

"Yes, if one is to accuse them in the mass, my dear Petitot; but there are spoil-alls amongst your theologians; intercepted correspondences depose to it. The allied Princes, having been unable to crush me by their invasions and artillery, have recourse to internal and clandestine manœuvres. Having failed to corrupt my soldiers, they have

essayed to corrupt my clergy, as they did at Montauban and La Rochelle, in the days of Cardinal Richelieu."

"Sire, do not believe in any such manœuvres; all your subjects love and admire you, whatever be their faith and communion."

"Petitot, you are an admirable painter and a most worthy man. Do not answer me, I beg you. If I believed you had as much genius and aptitude for great affairs as for the wonders of the brush, I would make you a counsellor of state on the instant, and a half-hour spent with me and my documents and papers of importance would be sufficient to make you believe and think as I do touching what has been discussed between us. Madame de Montespan, in great alarm, has told me that you wished to leave me. You leave me, my good friend! Where will you find a sky so pure and soft as the sky of France? Where will you find a King more tenderly attached to men of merit, more particularly to my dear and illustrious Petitot?"

At these words, pronounced with emotion, the artist felt the tears come into his eyes. He bent

one knee to the ground, respectfully kissed the hand of the Monarch, and promised to complete his portrait immediately.

He kept his word to us. The King's miniature and my four portraits were finished without hesitation or postponement; and Petitot also consented to copy for His Majesty a superb Christine of Sweden, a full-length picture painted by Le Bourdon. But at the final revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he thought his conscience, or rather his vanity, compromised, and quitted France, although the King offered to allow him a chaplain of his communion and a dispensation from all the oaths, to Petitot himself, to Boyer, his brother-in-law, and the chaplain whom they had retained with them.

CHAPTER XXXIX

LOVERS' VOWS—THE BODY-GUARDS—RACINE'S *PHÈDRE*—THE PIT—ALLUSIONS—THE DUEL—M. DE MONCLAR—THE COWLED SPY—HE ESCAPES WITH A FRIGHT—M. DE MONCLAR IN JERSEY—GRATITUDE OF THE MARQUISE—HAPPY MEMORY.

LOVERS, in the effervescence of their passion, exaggerate to themselves the strength and intensity of their sentiments. The momentary pleasure that this agreeable weakness causes them to feel brings them, in spite of themselves, to promise a long duration of it, so that they swear *eternal* fidelity, a constancy proof against all, two days after that one which shone on their most recent infidelity. I had seen the King neglect and abandon the amiable La Vallière, and I listened to him none the less credulously and confidently when he said to me: "Athénais, we have been created for each other: if Heaven were suddenly to deprive me of the Queen, I would have your marriage

dissolved, and, before the altar and the world, join your destiny to mine."

Full of these fantastic ideas, in which my hope and desire and credulity were centred, I had accepted those body-guards of state who never left my carriage. The poor Queen had murmured: I had disdained her murmurs. The public had manifested its disapproval: I had hardened myself, and fought against the insolent opinion of that public. I could not renounce my chimera of royalty, based on innumerable probabilities, and I used my guards in anticipation and as a preliminary.

One of them, one day, almost lost his life in following my carriage, which went along like a whirlwind. His horse fell on the high road to Versailles; his thigh was broken and his body horribly bruised. I descended from my carriage to see after him. I confided him, with the most impressive recommendations, to the physician or surgeon of Viroflai, who lavished on him his attentions, his skill and zeal, and who sent him back quite sound after a whole month of affectionate care.

The young Baron de Monclar (such was the name of this guard) thought himself happy in having merited my favour by this accident, and he remained sincerely and finally attached to me.

At the time of the temporary triumph of Mademoiselle de Fontanges, the spell which was over my eyes was dissipated. The illusions of my youth were lost, and I saw, at last, the real distance which divided me from the steps of the throne. The health of a still youthful Queen seemed to me as firm and unalterable then as it appeared to me weak and uncertain before. The inconstancy of the Monarch warned me of what might be still in store for me, and I resolved to withdraw myself, voluntarily and with prudence, within the just limits of my power.

M. le Prince de Luxembourg was one of my friends, and in command; I begged him to send me his guards no longer, but to reserve them for the reigning divinity, who had already more than once obtained them.

In these latter days, that is to say, since the eminent favour of the lady-in-waiting, having become the friend, and no longer the spouse of the

Prince, I frequently retired from this sight, so repugnant to me, and went and passed entire weeks at Paris, where the works on my large hotel, that had been suspended for divers reasons, were being resumed.

A *débutante*, as beautiful as she was clever, was drawing the entire capital to the Comédie Française. She obtained especial applause in the difficult part of Phèdre. My friends spoke marvels of it, and wished to take me there with them. Their box was engaged. We arrived as the curtain was going up. As I took my seat I noticed a certain stir in the orchestra and pit. The majority of glances were directed at my box, in which my apparition had attracted curiosity. I carried my fan to my face, under the pretext of the excessive glow of the lights. Immediately several voices were to be heard: "*Take away the fan, if you please.*" The young and foolish applauded this audacity; but all the better part disapproved.

The actress mentioned came on the scene and brought the incident to an end. Although deeply moved by what had occurred, I paid great attention to the magnificent part of Phèdre, which

often excited my admiration and profound pity. At some passages,[1] which everyone knows by heart, two or three insolent persons abandoned themselves to a petty war of allusions, and accenting these aggressive phrases with their applause, succeeded in directing general attention to me. Officers of the service noticed this beginning of disorder, and probably were concerned at my embarrassment. Some Gardes Français were called within the barrier of the parterre in order to restrain the disturbers. Suddenly a very lively quarrel broke out in the centre. Two young men with great excitement had come to blows, and soon we saw them sally forth with the openly expressed intention of settling their quarrel on the field. Was it my name, or a contest as to the talent of the actress which caused this commotion? My nephew, De Mortemart, was concerned for me, and the Comte de Marcilly assured us

---

1 PHÈDRE—

. . . . Je sais mes perfidies,
Oenone; et ne suis pas de ces femmes hardies
Qui, goûtant dans le crime une tranquille paix,
Ont su se faire un front qui ne rougit jamais.

—EDITOR'S NOTE.

that all these wrangles were solely with regard to the wife of Theseus.

Between the two pieces our company learnt that a gentleman from the provinces had insulted my name, and a body-guard, out of uniform, had taken this insult for himself; they had gone out to have an explanation.

The following day a religious minim of the House of Chaillot came to inform me of the state of affairs. The Baron de Monclar, of the body-guards of the King, had taken sanctuary in their monastery, after having killed, *in lawful duel*, beneath the outer walls of the Bois du Boulogne, the imprudent young man who, the night before at the play, had exposed me to the censure of the public. M. de Monclar was quite prepared for the inflexible severity of the King, as well as for the uselessness of my efforts. He only begged me to procure him a disguise of a common sort, so that he might immediately embark from the neighbourhood of Gainville or Bordeaux, and make for England or Spain; every moment was precious.

The sad position in which M. de Monclar had put himself in my behalf filled me with

sorrow. I gave a long sigh, and dried my first tears. I racked my sick and agitated head for the reply I ought to make to the good monk, and, to my great astonishment, my mind, ordinarily so prompt and active, suggested and offered me no suitable plan. This indecision, perhaps, rendered the worthy ambassador impatient and humiliated me; when, to end it, I made up my mind to request that M. de Monclar be secretly transferred from the House of Chaillot to my dwelling, where I should have time and all possible facilities to take concert with him as to the best means of action.

Suddenly raising my eyes to the monk of Chaillot, I surprised in his a ferocious look of expectation. This horrible discovery unnerved me—I gave a cry of terror; all my lackeys rushed in. I ordered the traitor to be seized and precipitated from the height of my balcony into the gardens. His arms were already bound ruthlessly, and my people were lifting him to throw him down, when he eluded their grasp, threw himself at my feet, and confessed that his disguise was assumed with the intent to discover the sanctuary

of the Baron de Monclar, the *assassin of his beloved brother.* "It is asserted, madam," added this man, rising, "that the Baron is confided to the Minim Fathers of Chaillot. I imagined that you were informed of it, and that by this means my family would succeed in reaching him."

"If he has killed the nobody who yesterday insulted me so unjustly," I said then to this villain who was ready for death, "he has done a *virtuous act*, but one which I condemn. I condemn it because of the law of the Prince, which is formal, and because of the dire peril into which he has run; for that my heart could almost praise and thank him. I was ignorant of his offence; I am ignorant of his place of refuge. Whoever you may be—the agent of a family in mourning, or of a magistrate who forgets what is due to me—leave my house before my wrath is rekindled. Depart, and never forget what one gains by putting on the livery of deceit in order to surprise and betray innocence."

My people conducted this unworthy man to the outer gate, and refused to satisfy some prayers which he addressed to them to be released

from his disagreeable bonds. The public, with its usual inconsequence, followed the monk with hooting, without troubling as to whether it were abusing a vile spy or a man of worth.

We waited for a whole month without receiving any news of our guard. At last he wrote to me from the island of Jersey, where he had been cast by a storm. I despatched the son of my intendant, who knew him perfectly; I sent him a letter of recommendation to His Majesty the King of England, who had preserved me in his affections, and to those matters of pure obligation which I could not refrain from without cruelty, I added a present of a hundred thousand livres, which was enough to furnish an honourable condition for my noble and generous cavalier in the land of exile.

The humour of my heart is of the kind which finishes by forgetting an injury and almost an outrage; but a service loyally rendered is graven upon it in uneffaceable characters, and when (at the solicitation of the King of England) our Monarch shall have pardoned M. de Monclar, I will search all through Paris to find him a rich and

lovely heiress, and will dower him myself, as his noble conduct and my heart demand.

I admire great souls as much as I loathe ingratitude and villainy.

CHAPTER XL

PARALLEL BETWEEN THE DIAMOND AND THE SUN — TASTE OF THE MARQUISE FOR PRECIOUS STONES— THE KING'S COLLECTION OF MEDALS—THE CROWN OF AGRIPPINA—THE DUCHESS OF YORK—DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE MARQUISE—TO LEND IS NOT TO GIVE—THE CROWN WELL GUARDED—FRIGHT OF THE MARQUISE— THE THIEF RECOGNISED—THE MARQUISE LETS HIM HANG—THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CROMWELL AND A TRUNK-MAKER — DELICATE RESTITUTIONS — THE BOURBONS OF MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

THE diamond is, beyond contradiction, the most beautiful creation of the hands of God, in the order of inanimate objects. This precious stone, as durable as the sun, and far more accessible than that, shines with the same fire, unites all its rays and colours in a single facet, and lavishes its charms, by night and day, in every clime, at all seasons; whilst the sun appears only when it so pleases; sometimes shining, sometimes misty, and shows itself off with innumerable pretensions.

From my tenderest childhood, I was notable amongst all my brothers and sisters for my distinct fondness for precious stones and diamonds. I have made a collection of them worthy of the Princes of Asia; and if my whole fortune were to fail me to-day, my pearls and diamonds, being left to me, would still give me opulence. The King, by a strange accident, shares this taste with me. He has, in his third closet, two huge pedestals, veneered in rosewood, and divided within, like cabinets of coins, into several layers. It is there that he has conveyed, one by one, all the finest diamonds of the crown. He consecrates to their examination, their study and their homage, the brief moments that his affairs leave him. And when, by his ambassadors, he comes to discover some new apparition of this kind in Asia or Europe, he does all that is possible to distance his competitors.

When he loved me with a tender love, I had only to wish and I obtained instantly all that could please me, in rare pearls, in superfine brilliants, sapphires, emeralds and rubies. One day His Majesty allowed me to carry home the famous

crown of Agrippina, executed with admirable art, and formed of eight sprays of large brilliants handsomely mounted. This precious object occupied me for several days in succession, and the more I examined the workmanship, the more I marvelled at its lightness and excellence, which was so great that our jewellers, compared with those of Nero and Agrippina, were as artisans and workmen.

The King having never spoken to me again of this ornament, I persuaded myself that he had made me a present of it; a circumstance which confirmed me in the delusions of my hope. I thought then that I ought not to leave in its light case an article of such immense value, and ordered a strong and solid casket in which to enshrine my treasure.

The imperial crown having been encased and its clasps well adjusted by as many little locks of steel, I shut the illustrious valuable in a cupboard in which I had a quantity of jewellery and precious stones. This beautiful crown was the constant object of my thoughts, my affections and my preference; but I only looked at it myself at long intervals, every six months, very briefly, for fear

of exciting the cupidity of servants, and exposing the glory of Agrippina to some danger.

When the Princess of Mantua passed through France on her way to marry the Duke of York, whose first wife had left him a widower, the King gave a brilliant reception to this young and lovely creature, daughter of a niece of Cardinal Mazarin.

The conversation was uniformly most agreeable, for she spoke French with fluency, and employed it with wit. There was talk of open-work crowns and shut crowns. The Marquis de Dangeau, something of a savant and antiquary, happened to remark that, under Nero, that magnificent Prince, the imperial crown had first been wrought in the form of an arch, such as is seen now.

The King said then: "I was ignorant of that fact; but the crown of the Empress, his mother, was not closed at all. The one *which belongs to me* is authentic; Madame la Marquise will show it to us."

A gracious invitation in dumb show completed this species of summons, and I was obliged to execute it. I returned to the King in the space of a few minutes, bringing back in its new case

the fugitive present, which a Monarch asked back again so politely and with such a good grace.

The crown of Agrippina, being placed publicly on a small round table, excited general attention and admiration. The Italian Princess, Madame de Maintenon, the Duc de Saint-Aignan, and Dangeau himself went into raptures over the rare perfection of these marvellously assorted brilliants. The King, drawing near, in his turn examined the masterpiece with pleasure. Suddenly, looking me in the face, he cried:

"But, madam, this is no longer my crown of Agrippina; all the diamonds have been changed!"

Imagine my trouble, and, I must say, my confusion! Approaching the wretched object, and casting my eyes over it with particular attention, I was not slow in verifying the King's assertion. The setting of this fine work had remained virtually the same; but some bold hand had removed the antique diamonds and substituted—false!

I was pale and trembling, and on the verge of swooning. The ladies were sorry for me. The King did me the honour of declaring aloud that I had assuredly been duped, and I was constrained

to explain this removal of the crown into a more solid and better case *for its preservation.*

At this naïve explanation the King fell to laughing, and said to the young Princess: "Madam, you will relate, if you please, this episode to the Court of London, and you will tell the King, from me, that nothing is so difficult to preserve now as our crowns; guards and locks are no more use."

Then, addressing me, His Majesty said, playfully: "You should have entrusted it to me sooner; I should have saved it. It is said that I understand that well."

My *amour-propre*, my actual honour, forbade me to put a veil over this domestic indignity. I assembled all my household, without excepting my intendant himself. I was aggrieved at the affront which I had met with at the King's, and I read grief and consternation on all faces. After some minutes' silence, my intendant proposed the immediate intervention of authority, and made me understand with ease that only the casket-maker could be the culprit.

This man's house was visited; he had left Paris nearly two years before. Further information

told us that, before disposing of his property, he had imprudently indulged in a certain ostentation of fortune, and had embarked for the new settlements of Pondicherry.

M. Colbert, who was still living, charged our governor to discover the culprit for him; and he was sent back to us with his hands and feet bound.

Put to the question, he denied at first, then confessed his crime. One of my chamber-maids, to whom he had made feigned love, introduced him into my house while I was away, and by the aid of this imprudent woman he had penetrated into my closets. The crown of Agrippina, which it had been necessary to show him because of the measures, had become almost as dear to him as to myself; and his ambition of another kind inspired him with his criminal and fatal temerity.

He did no good by petitioning me, and having me solicited after the sentence; I let him hang, as he richly deserved.

The King said on this occasion: "This casket-maker has, at least, left us the setting, but M. Cromwell took all."

The fortunate success of this affair restored

me, not to cheerfulness, but to that honourable calm which had fled far away from me. I made a reflection this time on my extreme imprudence, and understood that all the generosities of love are often no more than loans. I noticed amongst my jewels a goblet of gold, wrought with diamonds and rubies, which came from the first of the Médici Princesses. I waited for the King's fête to return this magnificent ornament to him nobly. I had a lily executed, all of emeralds and fine pearls; I poured essence of roses into the cup, placed in it the stem of the lily, in the form of a bouquet for the Prince, and that was my present for Saint-Louis' day.

I gave back to the King, by degrees, at least three millions' worth of important curiosities, which were like drops of water poured into the ocean. But I was anxious that if God destined me to perish by a sudden death, objects of this nature should not be seen and discovered amid my treasure.

As to my other diamonds, either changed in form, or acquired and collected by myself, I destine them for my four children by the King. These

pomps will have served to delight my eyes, which are pleased with them, and then they will go down to their first origin and source, belonging again to the Bourbons whom I have made.

CHAPTER XLI

THE DUCHESSE DE LESDIGUIÈRES — HER JEST — THE CHAISE OF CONVENIENCE — ANGER OF THE JESUITS — THEY ALLY THEMSELVES WITH THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS — THE FORTY HOURS' PRAYERS — THANKS OF THE MARQUISE TO THE PRELATE — HIS VISIT TO SAINT-JOSEPH — ANGER OF THE MARQUISE — HER WELCOME TO THE PRELATE.

THE insult offered me at the Comédie Française by a handful of the thoughtless immediately spread through the capital, and became, as it is easy to imagine, the talk of all the *salons*. I was aware that the Duchesse de Lesdiguières was keenly interested in this episode, and had embellished and, as it were, embroidered it with her commentaries and reflections. All these women who misconduct themselves are pitiless and severe. The more their scandalous conduct brands them on the forehead, the more they cry out against *scandal*. Their whole life is bemired with vice, and their mouth articulates no other words

than *prudence* and *virtue*, like those corrupt and infected doctors who have no indulgence for their patients.

The Duchesse de Lesdiguières, for a long time associated with the Archbishop of Paris, and known to live with that prelate like a miller with his wife, dared to say in her *salon*, that my presence at Racine's tragedy was, at the least, very useless, and the public having come there to see a *débutante*, certainly did not expect me.

The phrase was repeated to me, word for word, by my sister de Thianges, who did not conceal her anger, and wished to avenge me, if I did not avenge myself. The Marquise then informed me of another thing, which she had left me in ignorance of all along, from kind motives chiefly, and to prevent scandal.

"You remember, my sister," said the Marquise to me, "a sort of jest which escaped you when Père de la Chaise made the King communicate, in spite of all the noise of his new love affair and the follies of Mademoiselle de Fontanges? You nicknamed that benevolent Jesuit 'the Chaise of Convenience.' Your epigram made all Paris laugh except the

hypocrites and the Jesuits. Those worthy men resolved to have full satisfaction for your insult by stirring up the whole of Paris against you. The Archbishop entered readily into their plot, for he thought you supplanted; and he granted them the *Forty Hours' Prayers*, to obtain from God your expulsion from Court. Harlay, who is only imprudent in his debauches, preserved every external precaution, because of the King, whose temper he knows; he told the Jesuits that they must not expect either his pastoral letter or his mandate, but he allowed them secret commentaries, the familiar explanations of the confessional; he charged them to let the other monks and priests into the secret, and the field of battle being decided, the skirmishes began. With the aid and assistance of *King David*, that trivial breast-plate of every devotional insult, the preachers announced to their congregations that they must fast and mortify themselves for the cure of King David, who had fallen sick. The orators favoured with some wit, embellished their invectives; the ignorant and coarse amongst the priests spoiled everything. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed for a whole week in the churches, and

it ended by an announcement *to Israel* that their cry had reached the firmament, that David had grown cold to Bathsheba (they did not add, nevertheless, that David preferred another to Bathsheba with his whole heart). But the Duchesse de Fontanges gave offence neither to the Archbishop of Paris nor to the Jesuits. Her mind showed no hostility. The beauty was quite incapable of saying in the face of the world that a Jesuit resembled a 'Chaise of Convenience.'

"The Duchesse de Lesdiguières, covered with rouge and crimes, has put herself at the head of all these intrigues," added my sister; "and without having yet been able to subdue herself to the external parade of devotion, she has allowed herself to use against you all the base tricks of the most devout hypocrites."

"Let me act," I said to my sister; "this lady's good offices call for a mark of my gratitude. The *Forty Hours' Prayer* is an attention that is not paid to everyone; I owe M. de Paris my thanks."

I went and sat down at my writing-table, and wrote this fine prelate the following honeyed missive:—

"I have only just been informed, monseigneur, of the pains you have been at with God for the amelioration of the King and of myself. The gratitude which I feel for it cannot be expressed. I pray you to believe it to be as pure and sincere as your intention. A good bishop, as perfect and exemplary as yourself, is worthy of taking a passionate interest in the regularity of monarchs, and ours must owe you the highest rewards for this new mark of respect which it has pleased you to give him. I will find expressions capable of making him feel all that he owes to your *Forty Hours' Prayer*, and to that Christian and charitable emotion cast in the midst of a capital and a public. To all that only your mandate of accusation and allegorical sermons are lacking. Cardinals' hats, they say, are made to the measure of strong heads; we will go seek, in the robing-rooms of Rome, if there be one to meet the proportions of your ability. If ladies had as much honourable influence over the Vicar of Jesus Christ as simple bishops allow them, I should solicit, this very day, your wished-for recompense and exaltation. But it is the Monarch's affair; he will undertake it. I can only offer you, in my own person, M. Archbishop of Paris, my prayers for yours. My little church of Saint-Joseph has not the same splendour as your cathedral; but the incense that we burn there is of better quality than yours, for I get it from the Sultan of Persia. I will instruct my little community to-morrow to hold our *Forty Hours' Prayer*, that God may promptly cure you of your

Duchesse de Lesdiguières, who has been damning you for fourteen years.

"Deign to accept these most sincere reprisals, and believe me, without reserve, M. the Archbishop,

"THE MARQUISE DE MONTESPAN."

This letter cast the camp into alarm. There were goings and comings between the Episcopal Palace and the Jesuits of the Rue Saint-Antoine, and from this professed house to their College of Louis-le-Grand. The matadores of the society were of opinion that I should be conciliated by every possible means, and it was arranged that the Archbishop should pay me a visit at Saint-Joseph's, on the earliest possible occasion, to exculpate his virtuous colleagues and make me accept his disclaimers. He came, in effect, the following week. I made him wait for half-an-hour in the chapel, for half-an-hour in my parlour, and I ascended into my carriage, almost in his presence, without deigning either to see or salute him.

The mother of four legitimatised Princes was not made to support such outrages, nor to have interviews with their insolent authors.

Alarms, anxieties of consciences, weak but virtuous, have always found me gentle, and almost resigned; the false scruples of hypocrites and libertines will never receive from me aught but disdain and contempt.

CHAPTER XLII

THE VERSE OF BÉRÉNICE—PRAISES OF BOILEAU—THE KING'S AVERSION TO SATIRICAL WRITERS—THE PAINTER LE BRUN—HIS BACCHUS—THE WATER-BOTTLE—THE PYRAMID OF JEAN CHÂTEL INJURIOUS TO THE JESUITS—THEY SOLICIT ITS DEMOLITION—MADAME DE MAINTENON'S OPPOSITION—POLITICAL VIEWS OF HENRI IV. ON THIS MATTER—THE JESUITS OF PARIS PROCLAIM THE DEDICATION OF THEIR COLLEGE TO LOUIS THE GREAT—THE GOLD PIECES.

WHATEVER be the issue of a liaison, which cannot probably be eternal, I have too much judgment and equity to deny the King the great talents which are his by nature, or to dispute the surname of Great which has been given him in his lifetime, and which the ages to come must surely preserve. But here I am writing *secret* Memoirs, where I set down, as in a mirror, the most minute traits of the personages whom I bring on the stage, and I wish to relate in what

manner and with what aim this apotheosis affected the mind of those who flattered the Prince in their own interest.

The painters and sculptors, most artful of courtiers in their calling, had already represented the King, now with the attributes of Apollo, now in the costume of the god Mars, of Jupiter Tonans, Neptune, lord of the waves; now with the formidable and vigorous appearance of the great Hercules, who strangled serpents even in his cradle.

His Majesty saw all these ingenious allegories, examined them without vanity, with no enthusiasm, and seemed to regard them as accessories inherent to the composition, as conventional ornaments, the good and current small change of art. The adulations of Racine, in his *Bérénice*, having all a foundation of truth, pleased him, but chiefly for the grace of the poetry; and he sometimes recited them when he wished to recall and quote some fine verse.

The praises of Boileau, although well versified, had not, however, the fortune to please him. He found those verses *too methodical for poetry;* and the poet, moreover, seemed to him *somewhat*

a huckster, and in bad taste. The satirists might do what they liked, they never had his friendship. Perhaps he feared them.

When le Brun started preparing the magnificent cradle of the great gallery, he composed for the ceiling rich designs or cartoons, which in their entirety should represent the victories and great military or legislative achievements of the Prince. His work being finished, he came to present it to His Majesty, who on that day was dining with me. In one of the compartments the painter had depicted his hero in the guise of Bacchus; the King immediately took up a bottle of clear water and drank a big glass. I gave a great peal of laughter, and said to M. le Brun: "You see, monsieur, His Majesty's decision in that libation of pure water."

M. le Brun changed his design, seeing the King had no love for Bacchus, but he left the Thundering Jove, and all the other mythological flatteries, in regard to which no opinion had been given.

The Jesuits for a long time past had groaned at seeing, exactly opposite the Palace, in the

centre of Paris,[1] that humiliating pyramid which accused them of complicity with, or inciting the famous parricide of the student, Jean Châtel, assassin of Henri IV. Perè de la Chaise, many times and always in vain, had prayed His Majesty to render justice to the virtues of his order, and to command the destruction of this slanderous monument. The King had constantly refused, alleging to-day one motive, to-morrow another. One day, when the professed House of Paris came to hand him a respectful petition on the subject, His Majesty begged Madame de Maintenon to read it to him, and engaged us to listen to it with intelligence, in order to be able to give an opinion.

The Jesuits said in this document that the Parliament, with an excessive zeal, had formerly pushed things much too far in this matter. "For that Jean Châtel, student with the Jesuit fathers, having been heard to say to his professor that the King of Navarre, a true Huguenot, ought not to reign over France, which was truly Catholic, the

1 In the midst of the semi-circle in front of the Palais de Justice.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

magistrates were not, therefore, justified in concluding that that Jesuit, *and all the Jesuits*, had directed the dagger of Jean Châtel, a madman."

The petition further pointed out "that the good King Henri IV., who was better informed, had decided to recall the Society of Jesus, had re-established it in all his colleges, and had even chosen a confessor from their ranks.

"This fearful pyramid,[1] surcharged with wrathful inscriptions," added the petition, "designates our Society as a perpetual hotbed of regicidal conspiracy, and presents us to credulous people as an association of ambitious, thankless and corrupt assassins!!

"In the name of God, Sire, do away with this criminal and dangerous memento of old passions,

1 This monument represented a sort of small square temple, built of Arcueil stone and marble. Corinthian fluted pillars formed its general decoration, and enshrined the four fulminatory inscriptions. Independently of the obelisk, the cupola of this temple bore eight allegorical statues, of which the one was France in mourning; the second, Justice raising her sword, and the others the principal virtues of the King. On the principal side these words occurred: "Passer-by, whosoever thou be, abhor Jean Châtel, and the Jesuits who beguiled his youth and destroyed his reason."—EDITOR'S NOTE.

unjust hatreds, and the spirit of impiety which, after having led astray magistrates devoid of light, serves to-day only to beguile new generations, whom excess of light blinds, &c., &c."

When this letter was finished, the King said: "*I have never seen the famous pyramid; one of these days I will escape, so that I can see it without being observed.*" And then His Majesty asked me what I thought of the petition. I answered that I did not understand the inconsistency of M. de Sully, who, after consenting to the return of the Jesuits, had left in its place the monument which accused and branded them. I put it on Sully, the minister, because I dared not attack Henri IV. himself.

The King answered me: "There are faults of negligence such as that in every Government and under the best administrations. King Henri my grandfather was vivacity itself. He was easily irritated; he grew calm in the same way. For my part, I think that he pardoned the Jesuits, as he had the Leaguers, in the hope that his clemency would bring them all into peaceful disposition; in which he was certainly succeeding when a miscreant killed him."

Madame de Maintenon, *begged* to give her opinion, expressed herself in these terms: "Sire, this petition cannot be other than extremely well done, since a society of clever minds have taken the work in hand. We have not the trial of Jean Châtel before our eyes, with his interrogatories; it is impossible for us, then, to pronounce on the facts. In any case, there is one thing very certain: the Jesuits who are living at present are innocent, and most innocent of the faults of their predecessors.

"The sentences and anathemas which *surcharge* the pyramid, as they say, can in no way draw down upon them the anger of passers-by and the populace, for these inscriptions, which I have read, are in bad Latin. This monument, which is very rich and even elegant in itself, is placed upon the site of the destroyed house of the assassin Châtel. The most ignorant of your Parisians knows this circumstance, which he has learnt from family traditions. It is good that the people see every day before their eyes this solitary pyramid, which teaches how King's assassins are punished and what is done with the houses in which they were born.

"King Henri IV., for all his gaiety, had wits enough for four; he left the pyramid standing, as those indulgent people who compromise a great lawsuit, but do not on that account destroy the evidence and documents.

"This monument, besides, is the work of the Parliament of Paris; that illustrious assembly has raised it, and perhaps Your Majesty might seem to accuse justice by destroying what it has once done for a good cause."

The King smiled at the conclusions of the lady-in-waiting, and said to both of us: "This is between us three, I pray you, ladies; I will keep Père de la Chaise amused with promises some day."

Madame de Maintenon, for a brief time in her first youth a Calvinist, cherished always in the bottom of her heart a good share of those suspicions that Calvin's doctrine is careful to inspire against the Jesuits.

On the other hand, she retained amongst the Parliament a large number of friends whom she had known formerly at M. Scarron's, the son of a counsellor of the chamber. I understood that in those circumstances she was well pleased to

prove to the gentlemen of Parliament that the interests of their House were kept in good hands, and that she would not abandon her friends of the Place Royale and the Marais[1] for all the Jesuits and all the pyramids in the world.

The Parliament, which was informed of her conduct and fidelity, bore her infinite goodwill for it. The first president, decorated with his blue riband, came to express his formal thanks, and begged her to accept in perpetuity a *key of honour*[2] to the High Chamber.

The Jesuits, for perseverance and tenacity, can be compared with spiders who repair, or start again every instant at a damaged or broken thread. When these good fathers knew that their petition had not triumphed offhand, they struck out for some new road to reach the generous heart of the Monarch. Having learnt that an alderman, full

---

1 The Hotel Scarron exists still (1829) in the Rue Saint-Louis, au Marais.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

2 In famous and unusual causes, princes, ambassadors and *keys of honour*, came and occupied the *lanterns*, that is to say, elegant and well-furnished tribunes, from which all that passed in the grand hall of the Parliament could be seen.

of enthusiasm, had just proposed in full assembly at the Hôtel de Ville to raise a triumphal monument to the Peacemaker of Europe, and to proclaim him Louis the Great at a most brilliant fête, the Jesuit Fathers cleverly took the initiative, and whilst the Hotel de Ville was deliberating to obtain His Majesty's consent, the College of Clermont, in the Rue Saint-Jacques, brought out its annual thesis, and dedicated it to the King—*Louis the Great (Ludovico Magno).*

On the following day the masons raised scaffolding before the great door of the college, erased the original inscription — which consisted of the words: *College of Clermont*—to substitute for them, in letters of gold: *Royal College of Louis the Great.* These items of news reached Versailles one after the other. The King received them with visible satisfaction, and if only Père de la Chaise had known how to profit at the time by the emotion and sentiment of the Prince, he would have carried off the tall pyramid as an eagle does a sparrow. The confessor, a man of great circumspection, dared not force his penitent's hand; he was tactful with him in all things, and the

society had the trouble of its famous cajolery without gaining anything more at the game than compliments and gold pieces in sufficient plenty.

Some days afterwards the Monarch, of his own accord and without any incentive, remembered the offensive and mortifying pyramid; but Madame de Maintenon reminded him that it was desirable to *wait*, for scoffers would not be wanting to say that this demolition was one of the essential conditions of the bargain.

The King relished this advice. At the Court one must make haste to obtain anything; but to be forgotten, a few minutes' delay is sufficient.[1]

1 This pyramid was taken down two or three years before the Revolution by the wish of Louis XVI., after having stood for two hundred years.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

CHAPTER XLIII

LITTLE OPPORTUNE—M. AND MADAME BONTEMS—THE YOUNG MOOR WEANED—THE GOOD CURÉ—THE BLESSED VIRGIN—OPPORTUNE AT THE AUGUSTINIANS OF MEAUX—BOSSUET DIRECTOR—MADEMOISELLE ALBANIER AND LÉONTINE—FLIGHT OF OPPORTUNE—HER THREATS OF SUICIDE—VISIT OF THE MARQUISE—PRUDENCE OF THE COURT.

THE poor Queen had had several daughters, all divinely well-made and pretty as little Cupids. They kept in good health up to their third or fourth year; they went no further. It was as though a fate was over these charming creatures; so that the King and Queen trembled whenever the *accoucheurs* announced a daughter instead of a son.

My readers remember the little negress who was born to the Queen in the early days—she whom no one wanted, who was dismissed, relegated, disinherited, unacknowledged, deprived of her rank and name the very day of her birth;

and who, by a freak of destiny, enjoyed the finest health in the world, and surmounted, without any precautions or care, all the difficulties, perils and ailments of infancy.

M. Bontems, first *valet de chambre* of the *cabinets*, served as her guardian, or curator; even he only acted through the efforts and movements of an intermediary. It was wished that this young Princess should be ignorant of her birth, and in this I agree that, in the midst of crying injustice, the King kept his natural humanity. This poor child not being meant, and not being able, to appear at Court, it was better, indeed, to keep her from all knowledge of her rights, in order to deprive her, at one stroke, of the distress of her conformation, the hardship of her repudiation, and the despair of captivity. The King destined her for a convent when he saw her born, and M. Bontems promised that it should be so.

At the age of three, she was withdrawn from the hands of her nurse, and Madame Bontems put her to be weaned in her own part of the world. *Opportune*,[1] clothed and nourished like the other

1 She was born on Sainte-Opportune's Day.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

children of the farmer, who was her new patron, played with them in the barns or amongst the snow; she followed them into the orchards and fields; she filled, like them, her little basket with acorns that had been left after the crop was over, or ears of corn that the gleaners had neglected, or withered branches and twigs left by the wood-cutters for the poor. Her nude, or semi-nude, arms grew rough in the burning sun, and more so still in the frosts. Her pretty feet, so long as the fine season lasted, did not worry about being shod, and when November arrived with its terrors, Opportune took her little heeled *sabots* like the other country children. M. and Madame Bontems wrote every six months to enquire if she were dead, and each time the answer came that the little Moor was in wonderful health.

The pastor of the neighbouring hamlet felt pity for this poor child, who was sometimes tormented by her companions on account of her colour. The good curé even went so far as to declare, one day when there was a sermon, that the Virgin Mary, if one was to believe respectable books, was *black* from head to foot, which did not prevent her from

being most beautiful in the sight of God and of men.

This good curé taught the gentle little orphan to read and pray. He often came to her farm to visit her, and probably he knew her birth; he was in advanced age, and he died. Then Opportune was placed with the Augustinian ladies of Meaux, where Bossuet charged himself with the task of instructing her well in religion and of making her take the veil.

The lot of this young victim of pride and vain prejudices touched me in spite of myself, and often I made a firm resolution to take her away from her oppressors and adopt her in spite of everybody. The poor Queen, forgetting our rivalry, had taken all my children into her affections. Why should not I have shown a just recognition by protecting an innocent little creature animated with her breath, life and blood—a child whom she would have loved, I do not doubt, if she had been permitted to see and recognise her? This idea grew so fixed in my mind, that I resolved to see Opportune and do her some good, if I were able.

The interest of my position had led me once to

assure myself of the neighbourhood of the King by certain little measures, not of curiosity but of surveillance. I had put with M. Bontems a young man of intelligence and devotion, who, without passing due limits, kept me informed of many things which it is as well to know.

When I knew, without any doubt, the new abiding-place of Opportune, I secretly sent to the Augustinians of Meaux the young and intelligent sister of my woman of the bedchamber, who presented herself as an aspirant for the novitiate. They were ignorant in the house of the relations of Mademoiselle Albanier with her sister Léontine Osselin, so that they wrote to each other, but by means of a cipher, and under seal, addressing their missives to a relative.

Albanier lost no time in informing us that the little Opportune had begun to give her her confidence, and that the nuns took it in very good part, believing them both equally called to take the veil in their convent. Opportune knew, though in a somewhat vague way, to what great personage she owed her life, and it appeared that the good curé had informed her, out of compas-

sion, before he left this world. Albanier wrote to Léontine :

" Tell Madame la Marquise that Opportune is full of wit; she resembles M. le Duc du Maine as though she were his twin; her carriage is exactly that of the King; her body is built to perfection, and were it not for her colour, the black of which diminishes day by day, she would be one of the loveliest persons in France; she is sad and melancholy by temperament, but as I have succeeded in attracting her confidence, and diverting her as much as one can do in a purgatory like this, we dance sometimes in secret, and then you would think you saw Mademoiselle de Nantes dance and pirouette.

" When anyone pronounces the name of the King, she trembles. She asked me to-day whether I had seen the King, if he was handsome, if he was courteous and affable. It seemed to me as though she was already revolving some great project in her brain, and if I am not mistaken, she has quite decided to scale the fruit trees against our garden wall and escape across country.

" M. Bossuet in his quality of Bishop of

Meaux has the right of entry into this house; he has come here three times since my arrival; he has given me each time a little tap on my cheek in token of goodwill, and such as one gets at confirmation; he told me that he longs to see me take the veil of the Ursulines, as well as my *little scholar;* it is by that name he likes to call her.

"Opportune answers him with a stately air which would astound you; she only calls him *monsieur*, and when told that she has made an error, and that she should say *monseigneur*, she replies with great seriousness, 'I had forgotten it.'"

Mademoiselle Albanier, out of kindness to me, passed nearly two years in this house, which she always called her purgatory, but the endeavours of the superior and of M. Bossuet becoming daily more pressing, and her health, which had suffered, being unable to support the seclusion longer, she made up her mind to retire.

Her departure was a terrible blow to the daughter of the Queen. This young person, who was by nature affectionate, almost died of grief at the separation. We learnt that, after having been ill and then ailing for several weeks, she found the

means of escaping from the convent, and of taking refuge with some lordly *châtelaine*. M. de Meaux had her pursued, but as she threatened to kill herself if she were taken back to the Abbey of Notre Dame, the prelate wrote to M. Bontems, that is to say, to the real father, and poor Opportune was taken to Moret, a convent of Benedictines, in the forest of Fontainebleau. There they took the course of lavishing care, and kindness, and attentions on her. But as her destiny, written in her cradle, was an irrevocable sentence, she was finally made to take the veil, which suited her admirably, and which she wears with an infinite despair.

I disguised myself one day as a lady suitor who sought a lodging in the house. I established myself there for a week, under the name of the Comtesse de Clagny, and I saw, with my own eyes, a King's daughter reduced to singing matins. Her air of nobility and dignity struck me with admiration and moved me to tears. I thought of her four sisters, dead at such an early age, and deplored the cruelty of Fate, which had spared her in her childhood to kill her slowly and by degrees.

I would have accosted her in the gardens, and insinuated myself into her confidence, but the danger of these interviews, both for her and me, restrained what had been an ill-judged kindness. We should both have gone too far, and the Monarch would have been able to think that I was opposing him out of revenge, and to give him pain.

This consideration came and crushed all my projects of compassion and kindness. There are situations in life where we are condemned to see evil done in all liberty, without being able to call for succour or complain.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE ARISTOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF GENOA OFFENDS THE KING—ITS PUNISHMENT—RECEPTION OF THE DOGE AT PARIS AND VERSAILLES.

M. DE LOUVOIS—by nature, as I have said, hard and despotic—was quite satisfied to gain the same reputation for the King, in order to cover his own violence and rigour beneath the authority of the Monarch.

The King, I admit, did not like to be contradicted or opposed. He became irritated if one was unfortunate enough to do so; but I know from long experience that he readily accepted a good excuse, and by inclination liked neither to punish nor blame. The Marquis de Louvois was unceasingly occupied in exciting him against one Power and then another, and his policy was to keep the Prince in constant alarm of distrust in order to perpetuate wars and dissensions. This order of things pleased that minister, who dreaded intervals of calm and peace,

when the King came to examine expenses and to take account of the good or bad employment of millions.

The Republic of Genoa, accustomed to build vessels for all nations, built some of them, unfortunately, for the King's enemies. These constructions were paid for in advance. M. de Louvois, well-informed of what passed in Genoa, waited till the last moment to oppose the departure of the four or five new ships. The Genoese, promising to respect the King's will in the future, sent these vessels to their destination.

On the report and conclusions of M. de Louvois, His Majesty commanded the senators of Genoa to hand over to his Minister of War the sums arising from the sale of these, and to send their Doge and four of the most distinguished senators to beg the King's pardon in his Palace at Versailles.

The senate having replied that, by a fundamental law, a Doge could not leave the city without instantly losing his power and dignity, the King answered this message to the effect that the Doge would obey as an extraordinary circumstance, that

in this solitary case he would derogate from the laws of the Genoese Republic, and that, the King's will being explicit and unalterable, the Doge would none the less maintain his authority.

Whilst waiting, His Majesty sent a fleet into Italian waters, and the city of Genoa immediately sustained the most terrible bombardment.

The flag of distress and submission having been flown from all the towers, our admirals ceased, and the Doge set out for Versailles, accompanied by the four oldest senators.

At the news of their approach, all Paris echoed the songs of triumph that M. de Louvois had had composed. A spacious hotel was prepared to receive these representatives of a noble, aristocratic Republic; and, to withdraw them from the insults of the populace, they were given guards and archers.

Although the Château of Versailles was in all the lustre of its novelty, since it had only been inhabited for two years, I perceived that they had even been adding to its magnificence, and that everywhere were new curtains, new candelabra, new carpets. The throne on which the Monarch

was to sit surpassed all that we had ever seen hitherto.

On the eve of the solemn presentation the astonished ambassadors appeared *incognito* before the minister, who dictated to them their costumes, their reverences, and all the substance of their address. The influx of strangers and Parisians to Versailles, to be witnesses of such a spectacle, was so extraordinary and prodigious that the hostels and other public inns were insufficient, and they were obliged to light fires of yew in all the gardens.

In the great apartments there were persons of the highest rank who sought permission to pass the night on benches, so that they might be all there and prepared on the following day. On the two sides of the great gallery they had raised tribunes in steps, draped in *Cramoisi* velvet. It was on these steps, which were entirely new, that all the ladies were placed. The lords stood upright below them, and formed a double hedge on each side.

When His Majesty appeared on his throne, the fire of the diamonds with which he was

covered, for a moment dazzled all eyes. The King seemed to me less animated than was his wont; but his fine appearance, which never quits him, rendered him sufficiently fit for such a representation and his part in it.

The Doge of the humiliated Republic exhibited neither obsequiousness nor pride. We found his demeanour that of a philosopher prepared for all human events. His colleagues walked after him, but at a little distance. When the Doge Lescaro had asked for pardon, as he had submitted to do, two of his senators fell to weeping. The King, who noticed the general emotion, descended from his throne and spoke for some minutes with the five personages, and smiling on them with his most seductive grace, he once more drew all hearts to him.

I was placed at two paces from Madame de Maintenon. The Doge—who was never left by a master of ceremonies, who named the ladies to him — in passing before me, made a profound reverence. He then drew near Madame de Maintenon, who heard all his compliments, said to him, in Italian, all that could be said, *did him the*

honour to lean on his hand when descending from her tribune to return to the King's.

On the next day the Doge and senators came to present their homage to my children, and did not forget me in their visits of ceremony.

CHAPTER XLV

THE COMTE DE VERMANDOIS—HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE WORLD—QUARRELS WITH THE DAUPHIN—DUEL—SIEGE OF COURTRAI—THE CATHEDRAL OF ARRAS.

WHEN Madame de la Vallière (led by suggestions coming from the Most High) left the Court and the world to shut herself up in a cloister, she committed a great imprudence; I should not know how to repeat it. The Carmelites in the Rue Saint-Jacques could easily do without her; her two poor little children could not. The King confided them, I am well aware, to governors and governesses who were prudent, attentive and capable; but all the governors and preceptors in the world will never replace a mother, above all, in a place of dissipation, tumult and carelessness like the Court.

M. le Comte de Vermandois was only seven years old when exaggerated scruples and bad advice deprived him of his mother. This amiable child,

who loved her, at first suffered much from her absence and departure. He had to be taken to the Carmelites, where the sad metamorphosis of his mother, whom he had seen so brilliant and alluring, made him start back in fright.

He loved her always as much as he was loved by her, and in virtue of the permission formally given by the Pope, he went every week to pass an hour or two with her in her parlour. He regularly took there his singing and flute lessons; these were two amiable talents in which he excelled.

About his twelfth year he was taken with the measles, and passed through them fairly well. The small-pox came afterwards, but respected his charming brown face. A severe shower of rain, which caught him in some forest, made him take rheumatism; the waters of Vichy cured him; he returned beaming with health and grace.

The King loved him tenderly, and everybody at Court shared this predilection of the Monarch. M. de Vermandois, of a stature less than his father, was none the less one of the handsomest cavaliers at the Court. To all the graces of his amiable mother he joined an ease of manner, a

mixture of nobility and modesty, which made him noticeable in the midst of the most handsome and well-made. I loved him with a mother's fondness, and, from all his ingenuous and gallant caresses, it was easy to see that he made me a sincere return.

This poor Comte de Vermandois, about a year before the death of the Queen, had a great and famous dispute with Monsieur le Dauphin, a jealous Prince, which brought him his first troubles, and deprived him suddenly of the protecting favour of the Infanta-Queen.

At a ball, at the Duchesse de Villeroi's, all the Princes of the Blood appeared. Monseigneur, who from childhood had *had a fancy* for Mademoiselle de Blois, his legitimised sister, loved her far more definitely since her marriage with M. le Prince de Conti. Monseigneur is lacking in tact. At this ball he thought he could parade his sentiments, which were visibly unpleasant, both to the young husband and to the Princess herself. He danced, nevertheless, for some minutes with her; but, suddenly, she feigned to be seized with a sharp pain in the spleen, and was conducted to a sofa.

The young Comte de Vermandois came and sat there near her. They were both exhibiting signs of gaiety; their chatter amused them, and they were seen to laugh with great freedom. Although Monsieur le Dauphin was assuredly not in their thoughts, he thought they were making merry at his expense. He came and sat at the right of the Princess and said to her:—

"*Your brother is very ill-bred!*"

"Do you think so?" the Princess answered immediately. "My brother is the most amiable boy in the world. He is laughing at me talking to myself. He assures me that my pain is in my knee instead of being in the spleen, and that is what we were amusing ourselves at, quite innocently."

"Your brother thinks himself my equal," added the Prince; "in which he certainly makes a mistake. All his diamonds prove nothing; I shall have, when I like, those of the crown."

"So much the worse, monsieur," replied the Comte de Vermandois quickly. "Those diamonds should never change hands—at least for a very long time."

These words degenerating into an actual provocation, Monseigneur dared to say to his young brother that, were it not for his affection for the Princess, he would make him feel *that he was*——

"*My elder brother*," resumed the Comte de Vermandois, "and nothing more, I assure you."

Before the ball was over, they met in an alcove and gave each other a rendezvous not far from Marly. Both of them were punctual; but Monsieur le Dauphin had given his orders, so that they were followed in order to be separated.

The King was informed of this adventure; he immediately gave expression to his extreme dissatisfaction, and said:

"What! is there hatred and discord already between my children?"

I spoke next to elucidate the facts, for I had learnt everything, and I represented M. de Vermandois as unjustly provoked by his brother. His Majesty replied that Monsieur le Dauphin was the second personage in the Empire, and that all his brothers owed him *respect* up to a certain point.

"It was out of deference and *respect* that the

Comte accepted the challenge," said I to the King; "and here the offending party made the double attack."

"What a misfortune!" resumed the King. "I thought them as united amongst themselves as they are in my heart. Vermandois is quick, and as explosive as saltpetre; but he has the best nature in the world. I will reconcile them; they will obey me."

The scene took place in my apartment, owing to my Duc du Maine. "My son," said His Majesty to the child of the Carmelite, "I have learnt with pain what has passed at Madame de Villeroi's and then in the Bois de Marly. You will be pardoned for this imprudence because of your age; but never forget that Monsieur le Dauphin is your superior in every respect, and must succeed me some day."

"Sire," replied the Comte, "I have never offended nor wished to offend Monseigneur. Unhappily for me, he detests me, as though you had not the right to love me."

At these words Monsieur le Dauphin blushed, and the King hastened to declare that he loved all his children with a kindness perfectly alike;

that rank and distinctions of honour had been regulated, many centuries ago, by the supreme law of the State; that he desired union and concord in the heart of the royal family; and he commanded the two brothers to sacrifice for him all their petty grievances, and to embrace in his presence.

Hearing these words, the Comte de Vermandois, with a bow to his father, ran in front of Monseigneur, and spreading out his arms, would have embraced him. Monsieur le Dauphin remained cold and dumb; he received this mark of goodwill without returning it, and very obviously displeased his father thereby.

These little family events were hushed up, and Monseigneur was almost explicitly forbidden to entertain any other sentiments for Madame de Conti than those of due friendship and esteem.

Some time after that, Messieurs de Conti, great lovers of festivity, pleasure and costly delights, which are only suited for people of their kind, dragged the Comte de Vermandois, as a young *débutant*, into one of those licentious parties where a young man is compelled to see things which excite horror.

His first scruples overcome, M. de Vermandois, naturally disposed to what is out of the common, wished to give guarantees of his loyalty and courage; from a simple spectator he became, it is said, an accomplice.

There is always some false friend in these forbidden assemblies. The King heard the details of an orgy so unpardonable, and the precocious misconduct of his cherished son gave him so much pain, that I saw his tears fall. The assistant-governor of the young criminal was dismissed; his *valet de chambre* was sent to prison; only three of his servants were retained, and he himself was subjected to a state of penitence which included general confessions and the most severe discipline. He resigned himself sincerely to all these heavy punishments. He promised to associate only with his mother, his new governor, his English horses and his books; and this manner of life, carried out with a grandeur of soul, made of him in a few months a perfect gentleman, in the honourable and assured position to which his great heart destined him.

The King, satisfied with this trial, allowed

him to go and prove his valour at the sieges of Dixmude and Courtrai. All the staff-officers recognised soon in his conversation, his zeal, his methods, a worthy rival of the Vendômes. They wrote charming things of him to the Court. A few days afterwards we learned at Versailles that M. de Vermandois was dead, in consequence of an indisposition caught whilst bivouacking, which at first had not seemed dangerous.

The King deplored this loss, as a statesman and a good father. I was a witness of his affliction; it seemed to me extreme. One knew not whom to approach to break the news to the poor Carmelite. The Bishop of Meaux, sturdy personage, voluntarily undertook the mission, and went to it with a tranquil brow, for he loved such tasks.

To his hoarse and funereal voice *Sœur Louise* only replied with groans and tears. She fell upon the floor without consciousness, and M. Bossuet went on obstinately preaching Christian resignation and stoicism to a senseless mother who heard him not.

About a fortnight after the obsequies of the Prince (which I, too, had celebrated in my church

of Saint-Joseph), the under-prioress of that little community begged me to come to Paris for a brief time and consecrate half-an-hour to her. I responded to her invitation. This is the important secret which the good nun had to confide to me: Before expiring, the young Prince had found time to interview his faithful *valet de chambre* behind his curtains. "After my death," said he, "you will repair, not to the King my father, but to Madame la Marquise de Montespan, who has given me a thousand proofs of kindness in my behalf. You will remit to her my casket, in which all my private papers are kept. She will be kind enough to destroy all which ought not to survive me, and to hand over the remainder, not to my good mother, who will have only too much sorrow, but to Madame la Princesse de Conti, whose indulgence and kindness are known to me."

Sydney, this *valet de chambre*, informed me that the Comte was dead, not through excessive brandy, as the Dauphin's people spread abroad, but from a cerebral fever, which a copious bleeding would have dissipated at once. All the soldiers wept for this young Prince, whose generous affability

had charmed them. Sydney had just accompanied his body to Arras, where, by royal command, it had been laid in a vault of the cathedral. I opened his pretty casket of citron wood, with locks of steel and silver. The first object which met my eyes was a fine and charming portrait of Madame de la Vallière. The face was smiling in the midst of this great tragedy, and that upset me entirely, and made my tears flow again. Five or six tales of M. la Fontaine had been imitated most elegantly by the young Prince himself, and to these rather frivolous verses he had joined some songs and madrigals. All these little relics of a youth so eager to live betokened a mind that was agreeable, and not libertine. In any case the sacrifice was accomplished; reflections were in vain. I burned these papers, and all those which seemed to me without direct importance or striking interest. That was not the case with a correspondence, full of wit, tenderness and fire, of whose origin the good Sydney pretended ignorance, but which two or three anecdotes that were related sufficiently revealed to me. The handsome Comte de Vermandois, barely seventeen years old, had won the

heart of a fair lady, almost his own age, who expressed her passion for him with an energy, a delicacy, and a talent far beyond all that we admire in books.

I knew her; the King loved her. Her husband, a most distinguished field-officer, cherished her and believed her to be faithful. I burned this *dangerous* correspondence, for M. de Vermandois, barely adolescent, was already a father, and his mistress gloried in it.

On receiving this casket, in which she saw once more the portraits of her mother, her brother and her husband, Madame la Princesse de Conti felt the most sorrowful emotion. I told her that I had acquitted myself, out of kindness and respect, of a commission almost beyond my strength, and I begged her never to mention it to the King, who, perhaps, would have liked to see and judge himself all that I had destroyed.

M. le Comte de Vermandois left by his death the post of High-Admiral vacant. The King begged me to bring him my little Comte de Toulouse; and passing round his neck a fine chain of coral mixed with pearls, to which a diamond

anchor was attached, he invested him with the dignity of High-Admiral of France. — "Be ever prudent and good, my amiable child," he said to him, raising his voice, which had grown weak; "be happier than your predecessor, and never give me the grief of mourning your loss."

I thanked the King for my son, who looked at his decoration of brilliants and did not feel its importance. I hope that he will feel that later, and prove himself worthy of it.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE HOUSE OF SAINT-CYR — PETITION OF THE MONKS OF SAINT-DENIS TO THE KING AGAINST THE PLAN OF MADAME DE MAINTENON — MADAME DE MAINTENON SUMMONS THEM AND SENDS THEM AWAY WITH SMALL CONSOLATION.

AT the time when I founded my little community of Saint-Joseph, Madame de Maintenon had already collected near her château at Rueil a certain number of well-born but poor young persons, to whom she was giving a good education, proportioned to their present condition and their birth. She had charged herself with the maintenance of two former nuns, noble and well educated, who, at the fall of their community, had been recommended, or had procured a recommendation, to her. Mesdames de Brinon and du Basque were these two vagrant nuns. Madame de Maintenon, instinctively attracted to this sort of persons, welcomed and protected them.

The little pension or community of Rueil, having soon become known, several families who had fallen into distress or difficulty solicited the kindness of the directress towards their daughters, and Madame de Maintenon admitted more inmates than the space allowed. A more roomy habitation was bought nearer Versailles, which was still only temporary; and the King, having been taken into confidence with regard to these little girls, who mostly belonged to his own impoverished officers, judged that the moment had come to found a fine and large educational establishment for the young ladies of his nobility.

He bought, at the entrance to the village of Saint-Cyr, in close proximity to Versailles, a large old château, belonging to M. Séguier[1]; and on the site of this château, which he pulled down, the royal house of Saint-Cyr was speedily erected. I will not go into the nature and aim of a foundation which is known nowadays through the whole of Europe. I will content myself with observing that if Madame de Maintenon conceived the first idea of it, it is the great benefactions of

1 M. de Séguier-Montbrisson.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

the Monarch and the profound recognition of the nobility which have given stability and renown to this house.

Madame de Maintenon received much praise and incense as the foundress of this community. It has been quite easy for her to found so vast an establishment *with the treasures of France*, since she herself had remained poor, by her own confession, and had neither to sell nor encumber Maintenon, her sole property.

In founding my community of Saint-Joseph, I was neither seconded nor aided by anybody. Saint-Joseph springs entirely from myself, from good intentions, without noise or display. Saint-Joseph is one of my good actions, and although it makes no great noise in the world, I would rather have founded it than Saint-Cyr, where the most exalted houses procure admission for their children with false certificates of poverty.[1]

The buildings of Saint-Cyr, in spite of all the sums they have absorbed, have no external nobility

1 This abuse was suppressed on its first appearance, but it recurred and gained strength after the death of Madame de Maintenon.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

or grandeur. The foundress put upon it the seal of her parsimony, or, rather, of her general timidity. She is like Molière's Harpagon, who would like to do great things for little money.[1] The only beauty about the house is in the laundry and gardens. All the rest reminds you of a convent of Capucines. The chapel has not even necessary and indispensable dignity; it is a long, narrow barn, without arches, pillars, or decorations. The King, having wished to know beforehand what revenue would be needed for a community of four hundred persons, consulted M. de Louvois. That minister, accustomed to calculate open-handedly, put in an estimate of five hundred thousand livres a year. The foundress presented hers, which came to no more than twenty-five thousand crowns. His Majesty adopted a middle course, and assigned a revenue of three hundred thousand livres to his Royal House of Saint-Cyr.

The foundress, foreseeing the financial embarrassments which have supervened later, con-

1 Here Madame de Montespan forgets what she has just said, that Saint-Cyr cost "immense sums"; an ordinary effect of passion.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

ceived the idea of making the clergy (who are childless) support the education of these three hundred and fifty young ladies. In consequence, she cast her eyes upon the rich abbey of Saint-Denis, then vacant, and suggested it to the King, as being almost sufficient to provide for the new establishment.

This idea astonished the Prince. He found it, at first, audacious, not to say *perilous*; but, on further reflection, considering that the monks of Saint-Denis live under the rule of a prior, and never see their abbot, who is almost always a great noble and a man of the world, His Majesty consented to suppress the said abbey in order to provide for the children.

The monks of Saint-Denis, alarmed at such an innovation (which did not, however, affect their own goods and revenues), composed a petition in the form of the *factum* that our advocates draw up in a suit. They exclaimed in this document "on the disrepute which this innovation would bring upon their ancient, respectable and illustrious community. In suppressing the title of Abbey of Saint-Denis," they said further, "Your Majesty,

in reality, suppresses our abbey; and if our abbey is reduced to nothing, our basilica, where the Kings your ancestors lie, will be no more than a *royal church*, and will cease to be *abbatial*."

Further on, this petition said: "Sire, may it please Your Majesty, whose eyes can see so far, to appreciate this innovation in all its terrible consequences. By striking to-day dissolution and death into the first abbey of your kingdom, do you not fear to leave behind you a great and sinister precedent. . . . What Louis the Great has looked upon as possible will seem righteous and necessary to your successors; and it will happen, maybe, before long, that the thirst for conquests, and *the needs of the State* (those constant and familiar pretexts of ministers), will authorise some political Attila to extend your work, and wreak destruction upon the tabernacle by depriving it of the splendour which is its due, and which sustains it."

Madame de Maintenon, to whom this affair was entrusted, summoned the administrative monks of Saint-Denis to Versailles. She received them with her agreeable and seductive courtesy, and

putting on her dulcet and fluted voice, said to them that their alarm was without foundation; that His Majesty did not *suppress* their abbey; that he simply took it from the male sex to give it to the female, seeing that the Salic law never included the dignities of the Church nor her revenues.

"The King leaves you," she added, "those immense and prodigious treasures of Saint-Denis, more ancient, perhaps, than the Oriflamme. That is your finest property, your true and illustrious glory. In general, your abbots have been, to this very day, unknown to you. Do you find, gentlemen, that religion was more honoured and respected when men of battle, covered with murders and other crimes, were called Abbots of Saint-Denis? Beneath the government of the King such nominations would never have affected the Church; and after the present M. le Chevalier de Lorraine, we shall hear no more of nominating an abbot-commandant on the steps of the Opera.

"Our little girls are Cherubim and Seraphim, occupied unceasingly with the praise of the Lord. I recommend them to your holy prayers, and you can count on theirs."

With this compliment she dismissed the monks, and what she had resolved on was carried out.

The King, who all his life had loved children greatly, did not take long to contract an affection for this budding colony. He liked to assist sometimes at their recreations and exercises, and, as though Versailles had been at the other end of the world, he had a magnificent apartment built at Saint-Cyr. This fine armorial pavilion decorates the first long court in the centre. The mere buildings announce a king; the royal crown surmounts them.

At first the education of Saint-Cyr had been entrusted to canonesses; but a canoness only takes annual vows—that term expired, she is at liberty to retire and marry. Several of these ladies having proved thus irresolute as to their estate, and the house being afraid that a greater number would follow, the Abbé de Fénelon, who cannot endure limited or temporary devotion, thought fit to introduce fixed and perpetual vows into Saint-Cyr, and that willy-nilly.

This elegant abbé says all that he means,

and resolutely means all that he can say. By means of his *lectures*, a mixed and facile form of eloquence, which is his glory, he easily proved to these poor canonesses that streams and rivers flow ever since the world began, and never think of suspending their current or abandoning their direction. He reminded them that the sun, which is always in its place and always active, never dreams of abandoning its functions, either from inconstancy or caprice. He told them that wise kings are never seized with the idea or temptation of abdicating their crown, and that God, who serves them as a model and example, is ceaselessly occupied, with relation to the world, in preserving, reanimating, and maintaining it. Starting from there, the ingenious man made them confess that they ought to remain at their post and bind themselves to it by a perpetual vow.

The first effect of this fine oration having been a little dissipated, objections broke out. One young and lovely canoness[1] dared to maintain the rights of her freedom, even in the face of her most amiable enemy. Madame de Maintenon rushed to

1 Louise Ernestine de la Maison-Fort.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

the succour of the Abbé of Saint-Sulpice, and half by wheedling, half by tyranny, obtained *the cloister and perpetual vows.*

I must render this justice to the King; he never would pronounce or intervene in this pathetic struggle. His royal hand profited, no doubt, by a submission which the Abbé de Fénelon imposed upon timidity, credulity and obedience. The House of Saint-Cyr profited thereby; but the King only regretted a new religious convent, for, as a rule, he liked them not. How many times has he not unburdened himself before me on the subject.

CHAPTER XLVII

FINAL RUPTURE—TERRIBLE SCENE—MADAME DE MAINTENON IN THE BROCADED CHAIR.

To-day, when time and reflection, and, perhaps, that fund of contempt, which is so useful, have finally revealed to me the insurmountable necessities of life, I can look with a certain amount of composure at the injury which the King did me. I had at first resolved to conclude, with the chapter which you have just read, my narrative of the more or less important things which have passed or been unfolded before my eyes. For long I did not feel myself strong enough to approach a narrative which might open up all my old wounds and make my blood boil again; but I finished by considering that our Monarch's reign will be necessarily the subject of a multitude of commentaries, journals and memoirs. All these confidential writings will speak of me to the generations to be; some will paint me as one paints an object whom one loves; others, as the

object one detests. The latter, to render me more odious, will probably revile my character, and, perhaps, represent me as a cowardly and despairing mistress, who has descended even to supplications ! ! It is my part, therefore, to retrace with a firm and vigorous hand this important epoch of my life where my destiny, at once kind and cruel, reduced me to treat the greatest of all Kings both as my equal and as an inconstant friend, as a treacherous enemy, and as my inferior or subject. He had, at first, the intention of putting me to death—of that I am persuaded—but soon his natural gentleness got the better of his pride. He grasped the wounds in my heart from the deplorable commotion of my face. If his former friend was guilty in her speech, he was far more guilty by his actions. Like an equitable judge he pardoned neither of us; he did not forgive himself and he dared not condemn me.

Since this sad time of desertion and sorrow, into which the new state of things had brought me, MM. de Mortemart, de Nevers and de Vivonne had been glad to avoid me. They found my humour *altered*, and I admit that a woman who sulks, scolds or complains is not very attractive company.

One day the poor Maréchal de Vivonne came to see me; he opened my shutters to call my attention to the beauty of the sky, and my health seeming to him a trifle poor, he suggested to me to embark at once in his carriage and to go and dine at Clagny. I had no will left that day, so I accompanied my brother.

Being come to Clagny, the Maréchal, having shut himself up with me in his closet, said to me the words which follow:—

"You know, my sister, how all along you have been dear to me; the grief which is wearing you out does me almost as much harm as you. To-day I wish to hurt you for your own good, and get you away from this locality in spite of yourself. Kings are not to be opposed as we oppose our equals; our King, whom you know by heart, has never suffered contradiction. He has had you asked, two or three times already, to leave his palace and to go and live on your estates. Why do you delay to satisfy him, and to withdraw from so many eyes which watch you with pity?"

"The King, I am very sure, would like to see me away," I replied to the Maréchal, "but he has

never formally expressed himself, and it is untrue that any such wish has been intimated or insinuated to me."

"What! you did not receive two letters last year, which invited you to make up your mind and retire!"

"I received two anonymous letters; nothing is more true. Could those two letters have been sent to me by the King himself?"

"The Marquis de Chamarante wrote them to you, but beneath the eyes, and at the dictation, of His Majesty."

"Ah, God! What is it you tell me? What! the Marquis de Chamarante,[1] whom I thought one of my friends, has lent himself to such an embassy!"

"The Marquis is a good man, a man of honour; and his essential duty is to please his Sovereign, his master. Moreover, at the time when the letters were sent you, time remained to you for deliberation. To-day, all time for delay has expired; you must go away of your own free will, or

1 Gentleman-in-waiting to the Queen, and afterwards to Madame de Maintenon.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

receive the affront of a command, and a *lettre de cachet* in form."

"A *lettre de cachet* for me! for the mother of the Duc du Maine and the Comte du Toulouse! We shall see that, my brother! We shall see!"

"There is nothing to see or do but to summon here all your people, and leave to-morrow either for my château of Roissy, or for your palace at Petit-Bourg; things are pressing, and the day after to-morrow I will explain all without any secrecy."

"Explain it to me, at once, my brother, and I promise to satisfy you."

"Do you give me your word?"

"I give it you, my good and dear friend, with pleasure. Inform me of what is in progress."

"Madame de Maintenon, whom, having loved once greatly, you no longer love, had the kindness to have me summoned to her this morning."

"*The kindness!*"

"Do not interrupt me—yes, *the kindness*. From the moment that she is in favour, all that comes from her is considerable. She had me taken into her small *salon*, and there she charged me to

tell you that she has always loved you, that she always will; that your rupture with her has displeased the King; that for a long time, and on a thousand occasions, she has excused you to His Majesty; but that things are now hopeless; that your *retreat* is required at all costs, and that it will be joined with an annual pension of six hundred thousand livres."[1]

"And you advise me——?" I said to my brother.

"I advise you, I implore you, I conjure you, to accept these propositions which save everything."

My course was clear to me on the instant. Wishing to be relieved of the importunities of the maréchal (a courtier, if ever there was one), I embraced him with tears in my eyes. I assured him that, for the honour of the family and out of complacence, I accepted his propositions. I begged him to take me back to Versailles, where I had to gather together my money, jewels and papers.

The Duc de Vivonne, well as he knew me, did not suspect my trickery; he applied a score

1 Two million four hundred thousand francs to-day.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

of kisses to my "*pretty little white hands*," and his postillions, giving free play to their reins, speedily brought us back to the château.

All beaming with joy and satisfaction, he went to convey his reply to Madame de Maintenon, who was probably expecting him. Twenty minutes hardly elapsed. The King himself entered my apartment.

He came towards me with a friendly air, and, hardly remarking my agitation, which I was suppressing, he dared to address the following words to me: "The shortest follies are the best, dear Marquise; you see things at last as they should be seen. Your determination, which the Maréchal de Vivonne has just informed me of, gives me inexpressible pleasure; you are going to take the step of a clever woman, and everybody will applaud you for it. It will be eighteen years to-morrow[1] since we took a fancy for each other. At our then ages one sees only that which flatters one, and the satisfaction of the heart surpasses everything. Our attachment, if it had been right and legitimate, might have begun with the same ardour, but it

1 In 1667; she was born in 1641.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

could not have endured so long—that is the property of all contested affections.

"From our union amiable children have been born, for whom I have done, and will do, all that a father with good intentions can do. The Act which acknowledged them in full Parliament has not named you as their mother, because your *bonds* prevented it, but these respectful children know that they owe you their existence, and not one of them shall forget it while I live.

"You have charmed by your wit and the liveliness of your character the busiest years of my life and reign. That pleasant memory will never leave me, and separated though we be, as good sense and propriety of every kind demands, we shall still belong to each other in thought. Athénais will always be to me the mother of my dear children. I have been mindful up to this day to increase at different moments the amount of your fortune: I believe it to be considerable, and wish, nevertheless, to add to it even more. If the pension that Vivonne has just suggested to you appear insufficient, two lines from your pen will notify me that I must increase it.

"Your children being proclaimed Princes of France, the Court will be their customary residence, but you will see them frequently, and can count on my commands. Here they are coming, —not to say good-bye to you, but, as of old, to embrace you on *the eve of a journey.*

"If you are prudent, you will write first to the Marquis de Montespan, not to annul and revoke the judicial and legal separation which exists, but to inform him of your return to reasonable ideas, and of your resolve to be reconciled with the public."

With these words the King ceased speaking. I looked at him with a fixed gaze; a long sigh escaped from my heaving breast, and I had with him, as nearly as I can remember, the following conversation:—

"I admire the *sang-froid* with which a Prince who believes himself, and is believed by the whole universe, to be magnanimous, gives the word of dismissal to the tender friend of his youth — to that friend who, by a misfortune which is too well known, knew how to leave all and love him alone.

"From the day when the friendship which

had united us cooled and was dissipated, you have resumed with regard to me that distance which your rank authorises you, and on my side, I have submitted to see in you only my King. This revolution has taken effect without any shock, or noise, or scandal. It has continued for two years already; why should it not continue in the same manner until the moment when my two last children no longer require my eyes, and presence, and care? What sudden cause, what urgent motive, can determine you to exclude me? Does not, then, the humiliation which I have suffered for two years any longer satisfy your aversion?"

"What!" cried the Prince, in consternation, "is your resolution no longer the same? Do you go back upon what you promised to your brother?"

"I do not change my resolution," I resumed at once; "the places which you inhabit have neither charm nor attraction for my heart, which has always detested treachery and falseness. I consent to withdraw myself from your person, but on condition that the odious intriguer who has supplanted me shall follow the unhappy benefactress who once opened to her the doors of this

palace. I took her from a state of misery, and she plunges daggers into my breast."

"The Kings of Europe," said the Prince, white with agitation and anger, "have not yet laid down the law to me in my palace; you shall not make me submit to yours, madam. The person whom, for far too long, you have been offending and humiliating before my eyes, has ancestors who yield in nothing to your forefathers, and if you have introduced her to this palace, you have introduced here goodness, sweetness, talent, and virtue itself. This enemy, whom you defame in every quarter, and who every day amuses and justifies you, will abide near this throne, which her fathers have defended and which her good counsel now defends. In sending you to-day from a Court where your presence is without motive and pretext, I wished to keep from your knowledge, and from humanity, withdraw from your eyes an event likely to irritate you. Hate everything irritates you; say, madam, say, have your reasonings appeased it and amuse you; after to-morrow you will be more than ever a stranger in this district."

At these words I realised that it was a question

of the public triumph of my rival. All my firmness vanished; my heart was, as it were, distorted with the most rapid palpitations. I felt an icy coldness run through my veins, and I fell unconscious upon my carpet.

My women came to bring me help, and when my senses returned, I heard the King saying to my intendant: "*All this wearies me beyond endurance; she must go this very day.*"

"*Yes, I will go,*" I cried, seizing a dessert-knife which was on my bureau. I rushed forward with a mechanical movement upon my little Comte de Toulouse, whom I snatched from the hands of his father, and I was on the verge of sacrificing this child.

I shudder every time I think of that terrible and desperate scene. But reason had left me; sorrow filled my soul; I was no longer myself. My reader must be penetrated by my misfortune and have compassion on me.

Madame de Maintenon, informed probably of this storm, arrived and suddenly showed herself. To rush forward, snatch away the dagger and my child was but one movement for her. Her tears

coursed in abundance; and the King, leaning on the marble of my chimney-piece, shed tears and seemed to feel a sort of suffocation.

My women had removed my children. My intendant alone had remained in the deep embrasure of a shutter; the poor man had affliction and terror painted on his face. Madame de Maintenon had slightly wounded herself in seizing my knife. I saw her tearing her handkerchief, putting on lavender water in order to moisten the bandage. As she left me she took my hand with an air of kindness, and her tears began again.

The King, seeing her go out, retired without addressing me a word. I might call as much as I would; he did not return.

Until nightfall I seemed to be in a state of paralysis. My arms were like lead, my will could no longer stir them. I was distressed at first, and then I thanked God, who was delivering me from the torments of existence. All night my body and soul moved in the torrent and waves of a fever handed over to phantoms; I saw in turn the smiling plains of Paradise and the dire domain of Hell. My children, covered with wounds, asked me for

pardon, kneeling before me; and Madame de Maintenon, one mass of blood, reproached me for having killed her. On the following day a copious blood-letting, prescribed by my doctor, relieved my head and heart.

The following week Madame de Maintenon, entirely cured of her scratch, *consented* to the King's will, which she had opposed in order to excite it, and in the presence of the Marquis and Marquise de Montchevreuil, the Duc de Noailles, the Marquis de Chamarante, M. Bontems, and Mademoiselle Ninon, her permanent chambermaid, was married to the King of France and Navarre in the chapel of the château.

The Abbé de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, assisted by the Bishop of Chartres and Père de la Chaise, had the honour of blessing this marriage and presenting the rings of gold. After the ceremony, which took place at an early hour, and even by torchlight, there was a slight repast in the small apartments. The same persons, taking carriages, then repaired to Maintenon, where the great ceremony, the Mass, and all that is customary in such cases were celebrated.

At her return, Madame de Maintenon took possession of an extremely sumptuous apartment that had been carefully arranged and furnished for her. Her people continued to wear her livery, but she scarcely ever rode any more except in the great carriage of the King, where we saw her in the place which had been occupied by the Queen. In her interior the title of Majesty was given her; and the King, when he had to speak of her, only used the word *Madame*, without adding *Maintenon*, that having become too familiar and trivial.

He was desirous of proclaiming her; she consistently opposed it, and this prudent and wise conduct regained for her, little by little, the opinions which had been shocked.

A few days after the marriage, my health being somewhat re-established, I went to Petit-Bourg; but the Maréchal de Vivonne, his son Louis de Vivonne, all the Mortemarts, all the Rochehouarts, Thianges, Damas, Seignelays, Blainvilles and Colberts—in a word, counts, marquises, barons, prelates and duchesses, came to find me and attack me in my desert, in order to represent to me that since Madame de Maintenon was the

wife of the Monarch, I owed her my homage and respectful compliments. The whole family has done so, said these cruel relations; you only have not yet fulfilled this duty. You must do it, in God's name. She has neither airs nor *hauteur;* you will be marvellously well received. Your resistance would compromise us all.

Not desiring to harm or displease my family, and wishing, above all, to reinstate myself somewhat in the King's mind, I resolutely prepared for this distressing journey, and God gave me the necessary strength to execute it.

I appeared in a long robe of gold and silver before the new spouse of the Monarch. The King, who was sitting at a table, rose for a moment and encouraged me by his greeting. I made the three pauses and three reverences as I gradually approached Madame de Maintenon, who occupied a large and rich armchair of brocade. She did not rise; etiquette forbade it, and principally the presence of the all-powerful King of kings. Her complexion, ordinarily pale, and with a very slight tone of pink, was animated suddenly, and took all the colours of the rose. She made me a sign to

seat myself *on a stool*, and it seemed to me that her amiable gaze apologised to me. She spoke to me of Petit-Bourg, of the waters of Bourbon, of her country place, of my children, and said to me, smiling kindly: "I am going to confide in you. M. le Prince has already asked Mademoiselle de Nantes for his grandson, M. le Duc de Bourbon, and His Highness promises us his granddaughter for our Duc du Maine. Two or three years more, and we shall see all that."

After half-an-hour spent thus, I rose from this uncomfortable *stool* and made my farewell reverences. Madame de Maintenon, profiting by the King having leaned over to write, rose five or six inches in her chair, and said to me these words: "*Do not let us cease to love one another, I implore you.*"

I went to rest myself in the poor apartment which was still mine, since the keys had not yet been returned, and I sent for M. le Duc du Maine, who said to me coldly: "*I have much pleasure in seeing you again; we were going to write to you.*"

I had come out from Madame de Maintenon by the door of mirrors which leads to the great

gallery. There was much company there at the moment; M. le Prince de Salm came to me and said: "Go and put on your *peignoir;* you are flushed, and I can perfectly well understand why." He pressed my hand affectionately. In all the *salons* they were eager to see me pass. Some courageous persons came even within touch of my fan; and all were more or less pleased with my mishap and downfall. I had seen all these figures at my feet, and almost all were under obligations to me. I left Versailles again very early. When I was seated in my carriage I noticed the King, who, from the height of his balcony in the court of marble, watched me set off and disappear.

I settled at Paris, where my personal interest and my great fortune gave me an existence which many might have envied. I never returned to Versailles, except for the weddings of my eldest daughter, and of my son, the Serious[1]; I always loved him better than he did me.

Père de Latour, my director, obtained from

1 Louis Auguste de Bourbon, Duc du Maine, a good man. somewhat devout and melancholy.—(See the Memoirs of Dubois and Richelieu).—EDITOR'S NOTE.

me then, what I had refused hitherto to everybody, a letter of *reconciliation* to M. le Marquis de Montespan. I had foreseen the reply, which was that of an obstinate, ill-bred and evil man.

Pere de Latour, going further, wished to impose hard, not to say murderous, penances on me; I begged him to keep within bounds, and not to make me impatient. This Oratorian and his admirers have stated *that I wore a hair shirt and shroud.* Pious slanders, every word of them! I give many pensions and alms, that is to say, I do *good* to several families; the good that I bestow about me will be more agreeable to God than any harm I could do myself, and that I maintain.

The Marquis d'Antin, my son, since my disgrace . . .

HERE END THE MEMOIRS OF MADAME DE MONTESPAN

HISTORICAL NOTICE

To serve as a Supplement to these Memoirs.

It seems certain that the Memoirs of Madame de Montespan, suddenly interrupted in the manuscript which has reached us, had been carried on much further. At the time of the marriage of Mademoiselle de Nantes, which took place some time after the retirement of the Marquise,[1] a description of the fêtes celebrated on that occasion appeared with great success in the world, and was generally considered to be an extract from the Memoirs which it was known she was writing.

We must not forget, then, that the most desirable portion of the recollections of the favourite has escaped us; a picture of that Court, which she had painted so brilliantly in the days of her prosperity, traced with a mocking spirit in the midst of the regrets and irritations of her fall, would have been, undoubtedly, a curious thing to have; and it must be confessed that people who, to judge by certain journals, have an "established factory for memoirs," would have shown singular restraint, or made a singular blunder, in depriving us of this poignant reading. Since the publishers of contemporary memoirs possess, we are assured, history *ready-made*, they should

1 In 1685.

not have brought us up thus, in suspense at an uncompleted sentence, but have compelled the Marquise to write, at least, to the eve of her death.

To speak seriously, it is easy enough to explain how the last part of these Memoirs has been lost. The Marquise had never inspired any one of her family with a lively affection, and perhaps, after her death, her papers were abandoned as a useless part of her inheritance; perhaps, too, by a destiny quite opposite, they excited a too profound solicitude. Perhaps the tone of reproach, the anger of an outraged woman, which must have often displayed itself, made it a dangerous legacy for the heirs. In order to harmonise the respect due to the King with that for the memory of the historian, her souvenirs may have been accepted with a sort of reservation; by keeping what might be of service with the master, destroying what might displease, there would have been made of them, if one may say so, a one-sided account for posterity.

Madame de Montespan was (and it is a somewhat remarkable trait in a woman of her character) a good mother, and loved her children. The latter did not reciprocate. The Marquis d'Antin, her legitimate son, like the four legitimatised Princes, had but a cold attachment to her; that is a misfortune so common to women who have played, like her, with sacred ties, that one might almost regard it as a punishment in the order of Providence. Perhaps, too, the Marquise should attribute the indifference of her children to the caprices of her temper.

Rather bilious than nervous, though she pretended

above all to *nerves*, Madame de Montespan was *charming*, as the King must have perceived for long years, when she chose to be; but she brought into her ordinary relations, when they were not modified by the need to please, a certain stiffness, certain imperious and despotic forms, which she could not have failed to have with her children. She loved them always in full etiquette and state, a manner singularly calculated to make them ungrateful; and that was what happened.

If wit consists in quickness of perception, in subtlety of traits and expression, nobody at the Court of Louis XIV. had more wit than the Marquise. She was one of those people whose conversation has been rightly compared with fireworks; but it often happened that the sparks of this ever-glowing fire injured the spectator. The King himself found a place sometimes in the epigrams of the favourite, and no doubt these attacks, slight as they were, contributed to bring about her fall, and the elevation of Madame de Maintenon.

Madame de Montespan, who, in spite of her frankness, never speaks to us of this intemperate tongue, has left us in equal ignorance of a certain disposition to be carried out of herself, which, notably at the time of her rupture with the King, leads her to excesses hardly credible in a woman of her rank speaking to Louis XIV., a man as accustomed to make himself respected as there has ever been. The Marquise had already just treated him as a *deceiver and traitor*, epithets, which, if admissible in the vocabulary of ordinary lovers, must, nevertheless, have sounded odd in the ears of one who was royal.

"Madam," he replied, "I have done everything to

make you happy; you take pleasure in making me the most unhappy of men. For twelve years I have endured without complaint your caprices of every kind."

"And I, *Monsieur*, your *odour*," replied Madame de Montespan.

It is with a sort of shame, and with an apology to our readers, that we repeat this ill-bred remark; the cruellest cut that could be administered to the vanity of such a man as Louis XIV. It seems proved, indeed, he exhaled rather potently that nauseous odour which is attached more particularly to red-haired men. The consciousness of this disadvantage, which he was singularly set on concealing, caused him to search with passion for the most penetrating perfumes. One may remark that Madame de Montespan, in her Memoirs, relates that amber was his preferred perfume, and that he always used it.

After the marriage of Madame de Maintenon, the Marquise left the Court, and did not return except for the marriage of the Duc du Maine. That Prince espoused the granddaughter of the great Condé, who, for more than twelve years, had been *soliciting* this alliance. Madame de Montespan showed on this occasion a liberality worthy of a sovereign. She gave the bed, of which the gold embroidery mixed with pearls cost more than a million in coinage of to-day. She made a present to her daughter-in-law of a casket estimated at two millions, present value, and, having lent her son one of her three great golden services, she did not allow him to return it.

The wedding of Mademoiselle de Nantes had preceded that of the Duc du Maine; the Marquise, indisposed at the time, only appeared there for a moment, but there, too, her generous temper excited admiration. Generous is not the word. Madame de Montespan wished to show herself worthy of the King on these occasions of importance, for at heart she did not love to give.

Her household, since her departure from the Court, was maintained at Paris with splendour and magnificence, but she supervised all the details herself, and said to her intendant, with a sly smile: "It is a proof of my love for you, that I want to prevent you from damning yourself;" a precaution which, none the less, did not hinder that good servant from making a handsome fortune.

The mother of the Duchesse de Bourbon, and the Duc du Maine, Sovereign Prince of Dombes, maintained an exalted state, from which she never descended. In her reception-room there was her arm-chair alone, and the Princes, her children, when visiting her, occupied in her presence only the chairs without arms. She accompanied them (because of their rank) as far as the middle of the room, but never as far as the *salon*.

Her children and the great Mademoiselle excepted, she never escorted anyone.

Her habits harmonised very little with that excess of humility and penitence to which certain contemporaries allege she had been persuaded by Père Latour, the general of the Oratorians and her confessor. Her austerities went no further than alms-giving; as for hair

shirts and discipline, she believed that she could obtain salvation without them. Perhaps she hoped that M. de Montespan, her husband, would count for her. In spite of the manner in which she had separated from the King, partly through attachment, partly through the regrets of ambition, she could never think of her exile without shedding tears. She was curious to get information of Versailles, and when the journeys to Fontainebleau arrived, she was seen to betake herself to Petit-Bourg, situated in the neighbourhood. Her pleasure was to stay concealed in a closet looking on the road, in order to see the King's carriage pass.

The triumph of Madame de Maintenon had been too bitter for a heart like hers ever to bring itself to pardon; she broke even with the Abbess of Fontevrault, because the latter, like a woman aware of her interests, continued from time to time to correspond with *the former Widow Scarron*. After a silence of twelve years, she finally followed her sister's example, and wrote to thank her *old friend of the Hôtel d'Albret*, who, to oblige and please her, had just presented the family with a bishopric. The first step taken, she wrote to her from time to time, but in a style severe, studied cold, and measured, to the point of almost becoming insulting. The Maréchal de Vivonne died in the year 1688; she was most sensible of this loss, and was right in grieving over it; the marshal was a good adviser and her sincere friend. He resembled her in face, but his mind was far stronger in resolution and judgment. Madame de Montespan, because of her great impetuosity, passed generally for a proud woman;

that is an error. She was quick, impatient, and ready to scold, when there was any excuse for it; but she had more nobility and dignity than actual haughtiness. She got that sentiment from her education, her birth, and the conviction which she held that the declared gallantries of kings are, as it were, almost *marriages of the second class.*

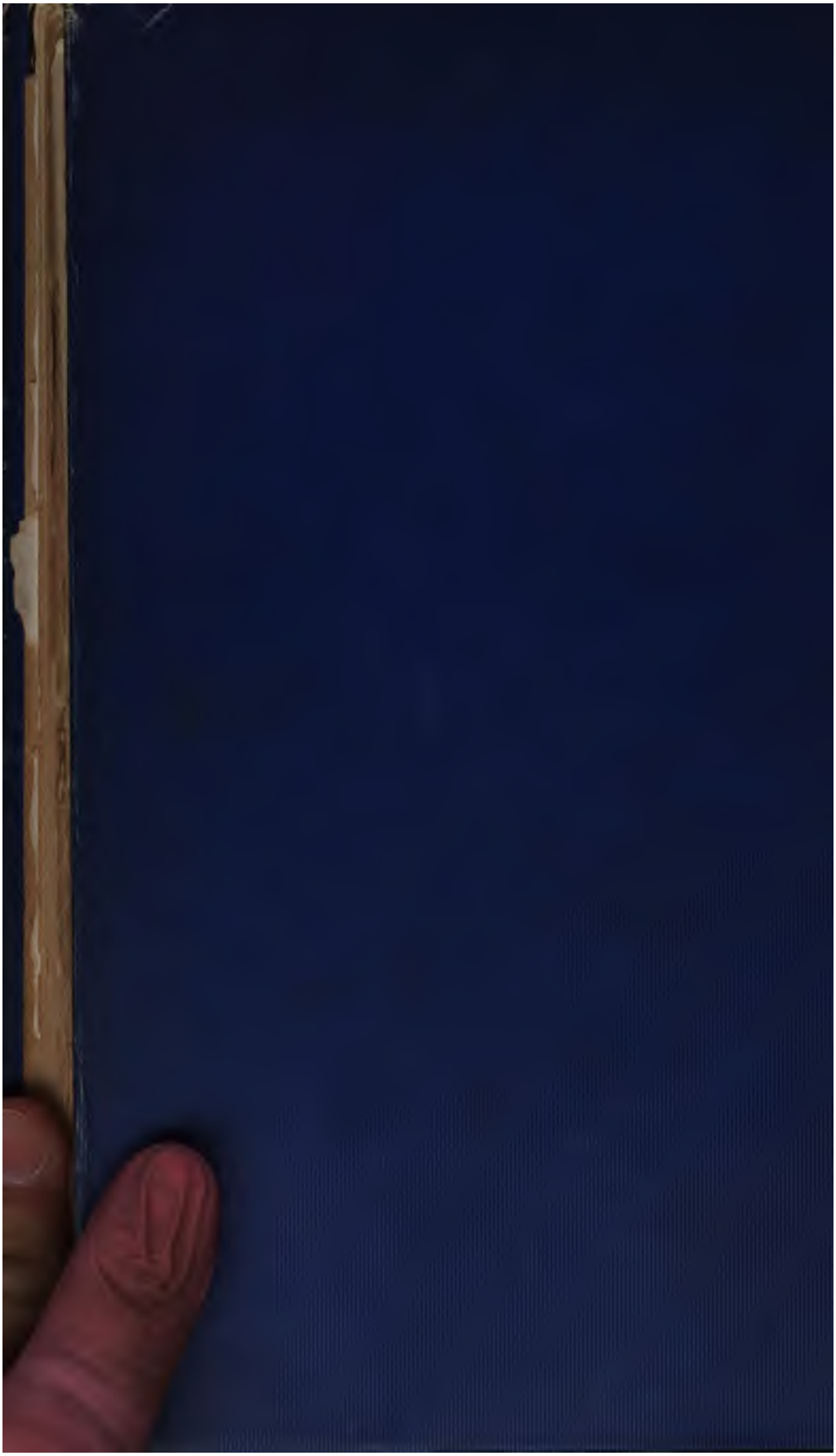
The favour which surrounded Madame de Maintenon, never again to leave her, set a price on all her letters. Families who had received them preserved them as being likely to become titles of admission to Saint-Cyr; but the letters of Madame de Montespan appeared of no value to anybody; and of all those ephemeral notes nothing has remained. There is no doubt that such communications, whatever may have been their subject, would have been, to-day at least, agreeable to read. *The wit of the Mortemarts* was there in all its vigour; great adversities had not yet assailed it.

Madame de Montespan saw Madame du Blois, the third of the name, become the wife of the Duc de Chartres. The annoyance which she felt cannot be expressed. The mother of the young Duke had been for so long her declared enemy, that she resolved to have no concern with the union, and refrained from all liberality.

The coarse blow given by the German Princess to her son seemed to Madame de Montespan like a blow given to herself; and it is alleged that she wrote Charlotte Isabelle of Bavaria a letter as deliberate as that to the Archbishop of Paris.

Madame de Montespan, in spite of her cares of ambition, preserved her beauty; a rare thing amongst blondes. As a relaxation, and by preference, she went almost every year to take the waters of Bourbon, which she liked both for the excursion and as a remedy. In 1707, she repaired there without any apparent remedy; but, none the less, declared that she would not return. She kept her word. A very brief illness reduced her to extremity, and the Marquis d'Antin only arrived to be a witness of her death agony. He hurriedly obtained possession of her keys, of which the most important were always upon her, and returned at once to Paris, where she had accumulated her treasures. By her will, the Marquise left her wedding-ring and her heart to the community of Saint-Joseph. She likewise destined for them her entrails; but the Capuchin Fathers of Bourbon, who were charged with this commission, confided it to a boatman, who, to save himself from infection, threw the casket into the river.

The Marquis d'Antin had a splendid *Requiem* celebrated, at which the legitimatised Princes did not assist. They nevertheless went into mourning as he did: but theirs only lasted three months. They thought, under the circumstances, that was sufficient.

944.03
M779
127774

M7
12777